12-1-2004

The Graduate Dean as Guardian of Standards and Academic Excellence

Cynthia H. Shabb

THE GRADUATE DEAN AS GUARDIAN OF STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

by

Cynthia H. Shabb
Bachelor of Science, University of Minnesota, 1979
Master of Library Science, Vanderbilt University, 1985

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota
December
2004

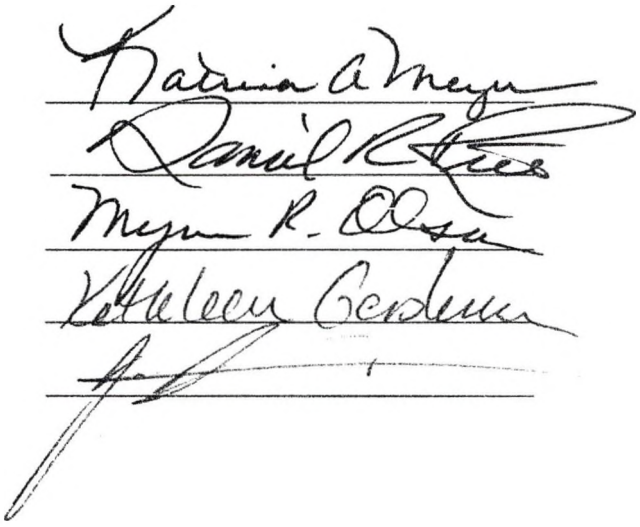
Dedicated to a wonderful role model and a life-long learner.

My mother,

Elaine Deuel Hennekens

(1920-2002)

This dissertation, submitted by Cynthia H. Shabb in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.



This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Joseph M. Benoit
Dean of the Graduate School

December 17, 2004
Date

PERMISSION

Title The Graduate Dean as Guardian of Standards and Academic Excellence

Department Educational Leadership

Degree Doctor of Philosophy

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of North Dakota, I agree that the library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my dissertation work or, in her absence, by the chairperson of the department or the dean of the Graduate School. It is understood that any copying or publication or other use of this dissertation or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of North Dakota in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation.

Signature Cynthia H. Shatt

Date 12/17/04

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have dedicated this work to my mother, Elaine D. Hennekens, who died as I was beginning this research. As I was growing up, my mother earned her master's degree and principal's license, so I have vivid images of her working at her desk. My mother's spirit lives on within those she left behind.

There are many people to acknowledge personally and professionally. I want to first thank my committee chair, Dr. Katrina Meyer. When she interviewed at the University of North Dakota she promised she would see me through the dissertation. Dr. Kathy Gershman's qualitative research classes and her one-on-one time with me was invaluable and very much appreciated. She helped me take a bunch of thoughts, code words, and ideas and make sense out of it on her famous white board discussions. She challenged me to develop a theory and with her ability to listen and give feedback, a product was developed. Dr. Myrna Olson's careful edits were a big help. In addition, I appreciated the empathy and understanding that I received from her as I struggled to maintain some kind of balance. Thanks go out to Dr. Dan Rice. The first class I took in my program was with Dr. Rice, and it was engaging. Dr. Jim Mochoruk's comments as the outside reader pushed me further and were invaluable to improving this work. I knew he had high standards and feel privileged to have experienced them.

I must thank the graduate deans who agreed to participate in the study. I knew I'd asked enough of one dean when I got the reply, " I am beginning to feel like a philosopher and coming to the conclusion that we will always be searching for the 'truthful' answers to

your questions." All of the interviews were so interesting and the deans were kind to give up valuable time. In addition, the deans who participated in my sample study were a big help to guiding the final study.

Special thanks goes out to Dr. Harvey Knull, who hired me as assistant d[illegible]ny opinion, Harvey Knull is the model dean: consensus builder, ambassador, advocate. He's a man with a heart of gold and his eye on high standards at all times.

I wish to especially thank Dr. Joey Benoit who has been supportive of my endeavors and patient with the length of time it took me to complete the degree. Thanks to the terrific Graduate School staff, especially Staci Matheny and Julie Simon, who have listened to my sagas and given me encouragement.

Thanks go out to my friends, especially Deb Glennen and Don Miller and all others who helped with the kids at critical times over the years. Also, I pay tribute to all of the students in the first cohort of Educational Leadership—may we all succeed.

I wish to thank my three sisters, Judy, Candace, and Nancy for believing that I could do this and I give special thanks to my brother-in-law, Rolf for suggesting it 24 years ago. My family deserves thanks. My son, Benjamin, is ready for me "not to have homework" and my daughter, Carolyn, has decided that getting a Ph.D. when you have children is too difficult. They've watched the project grow. My husband, John, has been the best advisor, mentor, and soundboard, one could ever ask. He listened to me, helped me hash out ideas and challenged my assumptions, making me go back to my interview data for clarification. John has been incredibly supportive through our 22 years of marriage.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of the graduate dean at selected American Universities. The primary method of investigating the role of the graduate dean was grounded theory. The sample for this study was composed of the graduate dean at the University of North Dakota (UND) and nine institutions identified by the North Dakota University System as UND's peers including Southern Illinois University—Carbondale, State University of New York at Buffalo, University of Louisville, University of Missouri—Kansas City, University of Nevada—Reno, University of South Carolina, Wright State University, Ohio University, and West Virginia University. The data analysis was based on transcriptions of semi-structured, in-depth interviews and responses to a case study. E-mail message responses assisted in clarifying or verifying an idea and were included in the analysis.

A grounded theory model was developed describing causal conditions that underlie the primary role of the dean, intervening conditions that influence the dean's decision-making, and the consequences of these conditions. In analyzing the data, I found that three issues that deans frequently raised were petitions, policies, and program development.

Assertions and sub-assertions were derived from the data. The first assertion was that the graduate dean modifies or upholds the standards. Secondly, standards may be modified by the creation of new policies. A sub-assertion was that deans aim to consider students' needs when new policies are developed. The third assertion was that deans

want quality programs approved that meet standards of academic excellence. A sub-assertion was that deans wanted programs to address needs of the state.

The graduate dean as the guardian of standards and academic excellence was the phenomenon in this study as participants most frequently discussed the importance of standards. All of the graduate deans, whether responding to petitions or policies, or working with faculty on new program proposals, had as their main concern whether the standards of academic excellence set forth for graduate education were being maintained.

Intervening conditions were discussed as well as the strategies that deans employ to handle petitions, develop new policies, and to facilitate new programs.

CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of the graduate dean. As assistant dean of the Graduate School at the University of North Dakota, I have a strong connection to the graduate dean's role. While ultimately it is the dean's decision to make an exception to a rule or regulation, adhere to or develop a new policy, and work with faculty to maintain and develop quality programs, the assistant or associate dean very often, on behalf of the dean, makes a decision, lends an opinion, offers advice or comments. As assistant dean I do the groundwork on a petition or policy. In addition, I render advice to the dean. It is because of this close working relationship that I became interested in understanding the role of the graduate dean. I also felt that learning what other deans do on their campuses can be beneficial. Sharing ideas and practices can improve the function of graduate education.

The researcher asked ten graduate deans to participate in a face-to-face or telephone interview. Each interview was audiotaped and complete transcriptions of the interviews were made. In addition to participating in interviews, the deans responded in writing or orally to a case study.

Background

Members of campuses make assumptions about the role of the graduate dean. Julius Lapidus, former President of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is on record

as saying that the graduate dean is the "conscience" of the University (talk at the Lapidus Luncheon, CGS, December 6, 2002 annual meeting). Debra Stewart (2000), current President of the Council of Graduate Schools, wrote "faculty often defend us [deans] as the 'moral authority' of the university" (p.1). Comments like these have prompted the researcher to explore the role of the dean in graduate education and to examine the impact the dean plays on campuses.

Several studies examine the role of the graduate dean at American universities (Brewer, 1978; Lynch and Bowker, 1984; Pennings, 1990; Springfield, 1978; Veit, 1975). In these quantitative studies, surveys of graduate deans were conducted to determine the responsibilities that deans have for various functions within graduate education. The CGS (2004c) has summarized a "compendium of graduate school activities"(p. 17). In this list of activities they make recommendations as to what could be included in the responsibilities of the graduate school. For example, the CGS (2004c) suggested "the graduate faculty should establish all academic policies governing graduate education, including requirements for students, curriculum, and faculty selection, and should review and comment on the allocation of resources" (p.17). As one considers the role of the graduate dean, one should also understand the role of the graduate school. The role of the graduate school, according to the Council of Graduate Schools is to "define and support excellence in graduate education, and the research and scholarly activities associated with it" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004c, p.4).

Pennings (1990) examined the administrative structure of graduate education. Graduate Schools have been defined as either centralized or decentralized systems. If a graduate school is centralized, then many of the administrative functions and decision-

making processes take place within the graduate school. For example, if students are offered admissions, if their assistantships are approved, if their degree requirements are tracked, and if it is determined that a student is eligible or ineligible to graduate by the graduate dean, then this is considered a centralized graduate school. If graduate departments or programs offer admissions to students, monitor their programs of study making sure they are meeting their degree requirements, and validate that the student has met graduation requirements then it is considered a decentralized system. Pennings (1990) determined that 91% of the public and private universities that she surveyed (n=113) had a centralized form of organizational structure (p. 54). Pennings (1990) found that in highly centralized organizational structures, graduate deans assumed increased responsibilities for graduate school/education and research (p.58). In addition, Pennings (1990) reported that graduate deans in the 1990's assumed more diverse roles in ensuring standards of quality for graduate education (p.5). Only one public university in the Pennings (1990) study was part of a decentralized organizational structure.

Little has been written about the impact of organizational structure on graduate education. Malaney (1998) wrote that "a study designed to investigate the organizational placement of graduate schools within the central administration and the effectiveness of the various structures could prove quite valuable to university administrators" (p.444-445). Pennings (1990) referred to organizational changes that were made from 1979 to 1989, focusing primarily on the trend of combining administration of research and graduate studies under a single university administrative officer. In 1981, 1990 and again in 2004, the Council of Graduate Schools advocated for a centralized administrative structure (Pennings, 1990, p. 23; CGS, 1990b, p. 1; CGS, 2004c, p. 2). In the Council of

Graduate Schools (2004c) *Organization and Administration of Graduate Education: A Policy Statement*, it is argued that,

> Although there is considerable room for differences of opinions and institutional variation in much of this discussion, one assumption remains clear throughout: given the diversity and decentralized nature of our institutions of higher education, the needs and concerns of graduate education are best served when its administration is carried out through a central university office (p. 2).

Is graduate education better served when it is done through a centralized system? Interviews with graduate dean in schools that have decentralized and centralized graduate education models may help describe their role.

Research Question and Method

The foundation for this study was a broad research question, "What is the role of the graduate dean?" Core themes were developed based on the amount of data collected on an idea or theme which reflect recurrent or underlying patterns of activities in the role of the graduate dean. I examined the significant ideas raised by the deans. Significance was determined by the number of times a particular issue was raised. In addition, consideration was given to how themes relate to other themes.

A grounded theory model was developed describing causal conditions that underlie the primary role of the dean, intervening conditions that influence the dean, and the outcome of these conditions.

Potential Significance

Every summer, the Council of Graduate Schools holds the New Deans Institute for graduate deans, designed to orient them to common issues that they might confront. Deans share their experiences, current topics are explored, and time is given for questions. This venue is one way deans can learn from others. The findings from this study may be helpful to new graduate deans or individuals who are considering becoming a dean.

More individuals are achieving advanced degrees than ever before. Strategic plans at universities are emphasizing growth in graduate programs and graduate student enrollment. The graduate dean is often the individual responsible for making decisions on petitions and exceptions to standards, encouraging and assisting with the development of new graduate programs, and helping shape policies and minimum standards for graduate students. A better understanding of the role of the graduate dean may assist deans as they try to shape policies and standards at their own institutions. This dissertation may also be helpful since it includes many comments from deans. Their experiences may be similar to another dean's experience, and these commonalities may be reassuring.

Researcher Bias

As the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School at the University of North Dakota, I felt it was important to rely on the data that was drawn from the interviews. Occasionally, during the interviews, the deans would talk about something familiar to me; in these situations I made a conscious effort to ask follow-up questions so that assumptions were not made based on what I knew about graduate education. I did try to follow Seidel's (1998) advice and "strike a balance" saying enough about myself and my

experiences "to be alive and responsive but little enough to preserve the autonomy of the participant's words and to keep the focus of attention on his or her experience rather than mine". (p. 80). Additionally, since I have only worked in a graduate school with a centralized system, it was particularly important for me to be open to deans who spoke about decentralized systems and to ask questions of them when it was not quite clear to me what was being described. The Council of Graduate Schools has long been an advocate of centralized graduate schools and I went into this study believing that this was the preferred system. This study encompasses a continuum of organizational styles, from centralized to decentralized. I listened closely to what the deans were saying to understand the organizational style rather than make assumptions about it based on prior knowledge.

Definition of Terms

Twenty-eight terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. Axial coding: In axial coding the data are assembled in new ways after open coding (Creswell, 1998, p. 57). Strauss & Corbin (1998) define axial coding as the "process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed 'axial' because coding occurs around the axis of a category" (p. 123).

2. Carnegie Classification: A systematic classification of institutions of higher education in the United States according to such variables as degrees awarded, field coverage, specialization, and federal research funds acquired. This study included institutions classified in two of the classifications: Doctoral/Research Universities—Extensive and Doctoral/Research Universities—Intensive. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching defines these classification systems this way:

Doctoral/Research Universities—Extensive: These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the doctorate. During the period studied, they awarded 50 or more doctoral degrees per year across at least 15 disciplines. Doctoral/Research Universities—Intensive: These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the doctorate. During the period studied, they awarded at least ten doctoral degrees per year across three or more disciplines, or at least 20 doctoral degrees per year overall (Carnegie Foundation, n. d.).

3. Category: Events, happenings, objects, and actions/interactions that are found to be conceptually similar in nature or related in meaning (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102).

4. Causal conditions: In grounded theory, "categories of conditions that influence the phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998, p.57).

5. Central phenomenon: A central category about a phenomenon. The word phenomenon answers the question 'What is going on here?' According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) "in looking for phenomena, we are to look for repeated patterns of happenings, events, or actions/interactions that represent what people do or say, alone or together, in response to the problems and situations in which they find themselves" (p. 130).

6. Centralization: According to the Oxford English Dictionary centralization is the concentration of administrative power in the hands of a central authority, to which all inferior departments, local branches, etc., are directly responsible (Simpson. & Weiner. 1989). For purposes of this study, it is when administrative functions of graduate education are centralized in a single unit such as the graduate school. For example, if the

offer to a student to attend a university comes from the graduate school, the admissions process is considered centralized.

7. Comparison Group Selection Service (CGSS): The service that UND used to select a list of peer institutions similar in mission to be used in comparative data analyses. CGSS is under the direction of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). There are two components to the CGSS: (1) a large database containing indicator variables and (2) a set of software programs designed to condense the list for a particular institution. The institution supplies a set of criteria to the software program.

8. Consequences: Consequences relate to the outcomes of the strategies for the phenomenon and answer the question as to what is happening.

9. Context: Particular set of conditions in which strategies occur.

10. Council of Graduate Schools: The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of institutions of higher education in the United States, Canada, and across the globe engaged in graduate education, research scholarship, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. CGS seeks to represent the interests of graduate education. Their mission is to improve and advance graduate education.

11. Decentralization: According to the Oxford English Dictionary decentralize means to undo the centralization of; to distribute administrative powers, etc., which have been concentrated in a single head or center (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).

12. Decentralized Graduate School: One in which authority and administrative controls are assigned to the deans of the various schools and colleges, rather than the graduate dean.

13. Graduate: Refers to all post-baccalaureate education in academic or scholarly fields.

14. Graduate Dean: The title "graduate dean" will be used to refer to the chief academic officer for graduate education. At some institutions in this study, the graduate dean's title is Vice Provost and Dean, or the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Dean.

15. Graduate Programs: Programs that are part of graduate education including: masters, doctoral, post-baccalaureate, certificate, and specializations.

16. Graduate School: The office or unit with responsibility for university graduate education affairs.

17. Grounded theory: One tradition of inquiry in qualitative research in which the intent is to generate or discover a theory that is "grounded in data from the field" (Creswell, 1998, p. 65). The theory is derived from the data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12).

18. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Data on higher education administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a unit of the U.S. Department of Education.

19. Intervening Conditions: Conditions that "mitigate or otherwise alter the impact of causal conditions on phenomena" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.131).

20. National Center for Higher Education Management Center (NCHEMS): NCHEMS is an American organization that provides access to national data collected about higher education. NCHEMS Information Services maintains a complete library of the HEGIS (Higher Education General Information Survey) and its successor, IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) files dating back over 25 years.

21. Open Coding: The process of coding data with words or concepts that describe what is in the data. During open coding the interview data are broken down into small discrete parts—words or codes are selected to describe what has been stated.

22. Policy: A course of action adopted and pursued by a government, party, rule, statesman, etc. (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).

23. Program Review: A periodic review process to develop insights into program operation with regard to the general principles and specific criteria proposed to govern graduate education.

24. Regulation: A rule prescribed for the management of some matter, or for the regulating of conduct; a governing precept or direction; a standing rule (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).

25. Role of Graduate Dean: The graduate dean plays an important function in the direction and focus of graduate education on a campus. The specific responsibilities of graduate deans vary from university to university but typically comprises those activities related to graduate education.

26. Rule: A principle, regulation or maxim governing individual conduct (Simpson & Weiner, 1989).

27. Strategies: The "actions or interactions that result from the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998, p. 57).

28. Time to Degree: The amount of time it takes for graduate students to complete their master's or doctoral degree.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the graduate deans were truthful when they were interviewed and that their perceptions of their role in graduate education were accurate.

Limitations of the Study

This study had its limitations. The researcher only interviewed ten graduate deans. Currently there are approximately 1,700 graduate degree-granting institutions in the United States (Syverson, 2002, p. i). Generalizing these results to 1,700 graduate deans may not be legitimate. The results of this study may only be useful to the University of North Dakota and its identified peers or other similar institutions.

Of the ten deans interviewed, all were male except for one. Gender may be a factor in the role of the graduate dean. This study does not take gender into account.

A further limitation arose concerning follow-up responses. In qualitative research it is common to go back and verify results with respondents. When individual deans were e-mailed requesting specific clarification on a topic they had already discussed during their interview, there was an excellent response rate. However all of the deans were e-mailed three times, once to ask them what issues they felt they influenced, another time to find out whether petitions had led them to change policies, and a third time to ask about whether national and world events affected standards. I heard back from only three deans each time, and different deans responded on three occasions. Thus, the desired consistency of the sample group could not be maintained in all parts of the study.

The graduate dean is only one of several influences on graduate education. There are multiple influences on graduate education. I did not interview other staff in the graduate school, graduate program directors, or graduate faculty to verify whether the

information the dean provided was accurate or to compare answers. It would be a different study if the researcher had chosen to interview graduate directors and graduate deans and compared their answers.

Budgetary resources available to graduate deans are not identified, although many of the deans discussed the kinds of monetary resources they had available to them. The amount of funding a dean has available for graduate education may play a major role in graduate education.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter I, an overview of the study was presented. Background to the study will be presented in Chapter II, incorporating a synopsis of graduate education, and the movement towards standards and accreditation in the United States. The role of the graduate dean and an understanding of centralized and decentralized institutions will be discussed in relationship to standards. A brief history of graduate education at the University of North Dakota will also be presented in Chapter II. A detailed description of the methodology is provided in Chapter III. Chapter IV will include the findings of the study and a description of the grounded theory model that was developed. In Chapter V conclusions will be offered, including a summary of the findings and a discussion of graduate deans and their roles, implications from the study, recommendations for further study, and reflections.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

In Chapter II the background for this study is provided. A synopsis of graduate education is the foundation for this chapter. A discussion of the history of master's and doctoral education, the movement towards standards and accreditation, the role of the graduate dean and graduate school, and an understanding of centralized and decentralized institutions will be discussed all in relationship to standards. A brief history of graduate education at the University of North Dakota will be given and an explanation as to how standards were an important issue from its founding will be explored.

Master's and Doctoral Education

In 1642 Harvard conferred the first master's degree given in the United States (Harriman, 1938, p. 26). The requirements for the master's degree at Harvard were later developed and contained in the Laws of 1655 and included completion of a bachelor's degree and the following (reproduced here in its original spelling):

> A written Synopsis, or Compendium of Logicke, Naturall Philosophy, morall philosophy, Arithmeticke, Geometry or Astronomy within a weeke of the Summer Solstace in his third yeare after his first degree (which Synopsis shall be kept in the Colledge Library) and shall bee ready to defend his positions, and be Skillfull in the Originall Tongues as aforesaid, having Staid three years after his

> first degree, and herein thrice problemed, twice declaimed, and once made a Common place or else some answerable exercise in the Studyes that he is most Conversant in and remaining of a blamelesse Conversation, at any publique Act having the approbation of the Overseers and the President of the Colledge, shall bee Capable of his Second degree, viz to be Master of Arts (Morison, 1936, p. 148).

Morison (1936) emphasizes that there were no specific course requirements; students were encouraged to read subjects they liked (p. 148). When they completed the three years, students were required to pay a fee and present the synopsis described above. College President Henry Dunster modeled Harvard after the standards of English universities, where time was the most important requirement for a graduate degree (Morison, 1936, p. 66). In England, the master's degree was not taken seriously until well into the 20th Century. The feeling was that if students stayed long enough at a university they were apt to acquire something. It was believed that "any system of examinations could be defeated by careless or corrupt examiners and superficially clever or well-crammed students, but terms or years of residence were something you could count on; for no lad, however dull, could live four years in a university town without acquiring some smattering of *bonae litterae*" (Morison, 1936, p. 66). President Dunster's goal was to keep students on campus for four years to complete their bachelor's and then another three years to earn the master's degree. This practice remained in effect until 1869 (Morison, 1936, p.66).

Discussions about standards for the master's degree were prominent in the United States during the 1860s. Harriman (1938) presented a concise "historical interpretation of

status and definition" of the master's degree (p. 23). In it, he described recommendations that concerned the establishment of standards for this degree. For example, Harriman recommended that a year of residence should be the minimum that a graduate student lives on campus and that the undergraduate degree should come from an "approved institution" (Harriman, 1938, p. 25). Johns Hopkins University reserved the right "in exceptional instances to dispense with the requirement of the baccalaureate degree" (Harriman, 1938, p. 25). Another requirement being adopted in the 1860s was that the courses making up the degree had to be at the graduate level, with the exception of small institutions where they may not have the "faculty, the library facilities, and the financial strength to carry out the intent of this recommendation" (Harriman, 1938, p. 25). Students at these small institutions often did their work in undergraduate classes. Another recommendation was that the student's proficiency be ascertained in a general examination. However, in the 1860s only the stronger institutions held a comprehensive examination (Harriman, 1938, p.25). In addition to the comprehensive examination requirement being questioned, the value of the thesis was also being discussed in the 1860s. The American Association of Universities recommended that a thesis be required, but institutions were competing for students and developed policies based on their own needs. Perhaps the thesis requirement was considered to be too intensive at many colleges and requirements were developed that were less stringent.

Doctoral education in America "was modeled after the German university of the nineteenth century" (Katz, 1976, p. 244). In the German university model, students pursued their scholarly interests, concentrating on an area of interest and emphasizing advanced study and laboratory research. American universities had grafted the German

structure onto the American college model, providing in a single institution both undergraduate education and advanced graduate study and research (Speicher, 2004).

Yale was the first American university to offer the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in 1860 through the department of Philosophy and the Arts (Rudolph, 1990, p. 335). By 1861, Yale had awarded three doctoral degrees (Rudolph, 1990, p. 335). In 1872, Harvard announced that it would offer formal graduate work and by 1873 it awarded its first Ph.D. (Malaney, 1988, p.398). Established in 1876, Johns Hopkins is known as the first research university in the United States (Johns Hopkins University, 2004). By 1876, 25 institutions were offering the Ph.D. with a total of 44 degrees awarded (Rudolph, 1990, p. 335).

According to Katz (1976), to obtain the Ph.D. degree at Harvard in 1930 required a student to "pass a comprehensive examination, have a reading knowledge of French and German, hand in a satisfactory dissertation, and survive a final oral examination" (p. 244). Harvard prized itself on allowing all points of view to be represented. Discovering a pathway to truth and accepting the many diverse ways of getting there was a value of Harvard (Katz, 1976, p. 244). The goal "was that the 'body of knowledge,' once it became fully assembled, would be in some sense a whole" (Katz, 1976, p. 245). Rudolph (1990) briefly described the development of graduate education at Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Michigan, Yale, and Harvard. Johns Hopkins organized graduate study in separate schools (Rudolph, 1990, p. 335; Malaney, 1988, p. 398). Johns Hopkins originally was the "premier American Ph.D. mill", but in 1926, it lost that title to Harvard (Rudolph, 1990, p. 336). Still, Johns Hopkins made its mark upon graduate education, since its graduates became faculty at many American colleges and universities. Rudolph

(1990) reported that in 1926 of the 1,400 Johns Hopkins graduates, 1,000 of them served as faculty at American colleges and universities (p. 336).

Princeton, Columbia, and Harvard subsidized foreign students' education costs, but it was Johns Hopkins that established and systemized this practice, developing fellowships. Johns Hopkins offered $500 fellowships to promising graduate students (Rudolph, 1990, p. 337). Fellowships are still used today to attract graduate students to programs.

The Movement Towards Standards and Accreditation

American universities in the later 1880s and early 1900s received little respect from the major universities in Europe and many Americans still went to European universities for graduate degrees. Approximately 10,000 American students attended German universities between 1815 and 1918 with at least half studying at the University of Berlin (Slate, 1994). Speicher (n. d.) blamed the decentralized nature of American education for this lack of respect. Speicher's (n.d.) reasoning for why Europeans did not accept American universities was as follows:

> The problem was that, unlike in Europe, higher education in America was decentralized and largely unregulated; diploma mills proliferated, and even shaky institutions could call themselves "universities" and award Ph.D.s. Some institutions, for example, allowed Ph.D. candidates to pursue courses without showing up on campus and to take exams at home under supervision of a proctor. The lack of standards and consistency was hurting the reputations of the more demanding U.S. universities (para 5).

While primarily a statistical agency, the establishment of the U.S. Department of Education in 1867 pushed higher education toward standardization. At the end of the nineteenth century, regional bodies (including the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the North Central Association of Schools and Secondary Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) were created to ensure a high quality of education (Harcleroad, 1980, p. 3). In the late 1890s and early 1900s, standardization of entrance requirements and the definition of admission credits were topics of interest. The National Association of State Universities (created in 1896) the Association of American Universities (created in 1900) and the Association of Land-Grant Colleges (created in 1900) sought common ground at a meeting held in Williamstown, Massachusetts in 1906. From their efforts, "the whole fabric of collegiate and university accreditation was developed" (Rudolph, 1990, p. 438).

In 1900, the American Association of Universities (AAU) and its graduate arm, the Association of Graduate Schools (AGS), was established (Spriestersbach, 2000). Five university presidents and nine deans or other campus administrators attended the first meeting of the American Association of Universities at the University of Chicago. Founding members included The Catholic University of America, Clark University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Harvard University, The Johns Hopkins University, Princeton University, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, University of Wisconsin- Madison, and Yale University. In a letter dated January 1900, the presidents of Harvard, Columbia, John Hopkins, The University of Chicago, and the University of

California invited nine other presidents to meet in Chicago in order to realize the following goals: 1) To bring about "a greater uniformity of the conditions under which students may become candidates for higher degrees in different American universities, thereby solving the problem of migration;" 2) to "raise the opinion entertained abroad of our own Doctor's degree;" and (3) to "raise the standard of our own weaker institutions" (Slate, 1994, p. 5).

Issues at the AAU meetings focused on the "nature of the dissertation, the meaning of research, the conditions of fellowship awards, admission requirements, preparation for college teaching, the role of the master's degree, and foreign language requirements" (Walters, 1965, p. 16). Walters (1965) pointed out that "perhaps the greatest work of the AAU lay in its attempts to raise the standards of graduate study" (p. 16). Graduate deans from these leading universities visited institutions and searched for facts about them before placing the institutions on the "AAU Accepted List" (Speicher, para 12). The purpose of the list was to provide "foreign universities with a list of colleges whose graduates could be considered adequately prepared to undertake graduate study" (Speicher, para 12). The list, consisting of its own member institutions, and others throughout the nation, was controversial and President Taft asked the Commissioner of Education to "withhold the list indefinitely" (Slater, 1994, p. 35). When Woodrow Wilson became president of the United States, he did not take any steps to reverse the decision and did not allow the list to be published. However, the list was released in 1913 due to pressures from German institutions so that students from Germany could better choose an American institution.

Beginning in 1914, the AAU functioned as an accreditation agency. Universities were invited to join AAU; in other words, an institution could not pay dues and belong to AAU. From the late 1910s to the 1940s, AAU meetings were primarily forums for the graduate deans to discuss accreditation and common problems in graduate education thus, presidents of the universities stopped attending the meetings (Speicher, 2004, para 12). In 1948, graduate deans wished to include graduate programs in the accreditation process; however, this proposal was rejected by the presidents, resulting in a reassessment of the association. In 1949, the organization divided into two: AAU for presidents and the Association of Graduate Schools (AGS) for graduate deans. The AAU's direction had changed from concerning itself with internal higher education matters to a focus upon the relationship between higher education and the federal government. During World War II, universities developed important medical and scientific related research breakthroughs that helped with the war effort. These breakthroughs helped lay the basis for sustaining federal support of basic research at universities. Vannevar Bush, Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, in his 1945 report, "Science—The Endless Frontier" wrote:

> The publicly and privately supported colleges, universities, and research institutes are the centers of basic research. They are the wellsprings of knowledge and understanding. As long as they are vigorous and healthy and their scientists are free to pursue the truth wherever it may lead, there will be a flow of new scientific knowledge to those who can apply it to practical problems in Government, in industry, or elsewhere (Bush, Chapter 1, Section 4; In Freedom of Inquiry Must be Preserved).

In this same report, Bush (1945) wrote the following: "The Government should provide a reasonable number of undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships in order to develop scientific talent in American youth" (Bush, Summary of the Report.) As a result of this report, the National Science Foundation (NSF) was founded in 1950 and to this day offers financial federal support for research endeavors at universities. The arguments from this report to support research with federal dollars could be used today. This involvement with the federal government changed the focus of the AAU. By 1978, the AAU had "an executive director for federal relations and professional staff focusing on federal funding and policy issues surrounding research in the sciences and engineering, biomedical research, graduate education, and the humanities" (Speicher, para 25).

The graduate deans of AAU institutions form the Association of Graduate Schools (AGS), which provides a forum for addressing issues concerning doctoral education and serves as an advisory body to the AAU on graduate education policy. In addition, the AAU coordinates activities with the CGS. Annual CGS meetings address graduate education issues as they relay updates on current trends and programmatic and funding opportunities. In addition they bring in speakers to discuss best practices and allowing deans and graduate education administrators opportunities to share what is happening on their campuses. CGS has the following mission statement on their website: "Our mission is to improve and advance graduate education. CGS accomplishes its mission through advocacy in the federal policy arena, innovative research, and the development and dissemination of best practices" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004a, History and mission).

Specialized accrediting bodies accredit programs, or schools in the case of an institution specializing in an area. Accreditation is defined as a status granted to an educational institution that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. Two fundamental purposes of accreditation are to "assure the quality of an institution or a program and to assist in the improvement of the institution or program" (Bogue and Saunders, 1992, p. 32). The accreditation of an institution or program means that it has an "appropriate mission and purposes, resources necessary to achieve these purposes, and a history and record implying that it will continue to achieve its purpose" (Bogue and Saunders, 1992, p. 32). Young (1983) defines the accreditation process as a way "by which an institution evaluates its educational activities, in whole or in part, and seeks an independent judgment to confirm that it substantially achieves its objectives and is generally equal in quality to comparable institutions or specialized units" (p. 21).

Currently, there are approximately 40 specialized accrediting bodies in fields such as business, engineering, teaching, law, and medicine (Chernay, 1990, p. 4). In addition to specialized associations, regional voluntary accreditation evolved slowly, beginning in the late nineteenth century. Six regional associations were formed and are still in existence today. Regional accrediting associations have broad standards and criteria for evaluating institutional effectiveness. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges was founded in 1885 to advance the cause of liberal education. The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, also created in 1885, published its first list of accredited institutions in 1913 (Bogue and Saunders, 1992). In 1929, the Higher Education Commission of the North Central Association appointed a committee to revise standards and out of this committee evolved a seven-volume report which

stressed that institu ons would be evaluated according to their own purposes, as determined in their self study, not by arbitrary standards (Bogue and Saunders, 1992, p. 38). The self-study process is still in use today. In the self-study, institutional and programmatic strengths and weaknesses are to be identified. The aim of the self-study must be to understand, evaluate, and improve the institution. The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) has developed an alternative accreditation review that "gives greater attention to an institution's mission as the basis for determining its effectiveness." and programmatic strengths and weaknesses are to be identified (Eaton, 2001, p. 41).

In 1887, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools was founded to strengthen the relationships among institutions and to promote educational legislation. By 1921, it too was publishing a list of approved institutions. This preoccupation with monitoring schools characterized the beginning of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which was created in 1895. The Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools was established in 1917 to foster growth and cooperation between secondary schools and institutions of higher education in the northwestern United States. The youngest regional association is the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which was established in 1924 for the purpose of discussing common problems (Mayhew, 1990).

The Role of the Graduate Dean and the Graduate School

At the 1986 annual CGS meeting, John H. D'Arms, Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Michigan, said that the regardless of the organizational structure of graduate education "graduate deans must be vigorous, articulate champions of

excellence—pervasive exemplars, if you will, of an institution's dedication to the highest possible levels of academic expectation" (Khalil, 1987, p. 18). Still, it is clear that the role and function of the graduate dean are dependent somewhat on how graduate education fits within the institution. Development of new programs, review of existing programs, and establishing academic policies governing graduate education, including qualifications of graduate faculty, are often done under the purview of a graduate council. Most likely the structure of graduate education is centralized or decentralized and this influences the role of the dean. However, this study will confirm that whether graduate deans are part of a centralized or decentralized structure, the concern for high standards of graduate education is consistent. The graduate dean is often faced with documenting the quality and effectiveness of graduate programs through program reviews and assessment procedures. Sims and Syverson (2003) discuss the role of the graduate dean in the following terms:

> Graduate deans have a unique position within this system of distributed responsibility. They have primary responsibility for programmatic aspects but often little responsibility for or control over budgets or faculty members and student personnel issues. Rather, the authority of the graduate dean derives from the ethical principles and integrity that are the foundation of the graduate educational enterprise (p. 59).

There is general agreement that the role of the graduate dean is different than that of any other dean at a university. Graduate deans do not have faculty members reporting directly to them and many do not have a direct budget to use for graduate education. Nichols (1959) described the role of the graduate dean as "ambiguous," unless the

graduate dean works his or her way to the heart of central administration (p.123). There may be "intangible" qualities of leadership that effective graduate deans employ that are more difficult to describe (Stewart, 1959, p. 139). Graduate deans may be seen "as initiators of change... innovators by persuasion rather than by administrative power" (Heiss, 1970, p. 57). Powell (1987) described "everyday expectations of the graduate dean" saying that "some call us the bulldog of standards" and he stressed that to have high standards means to be good decision makers (p.16). According to Powell (1987) defining excellence and improving programs means to decide "where we are not going to be excellent" (p. 18). Powell may be saying that if there are limited resources put the funding in specific areas—do not over expand. In other words, concentrate on making strong programs even better. Powell may also be suggesting elimination of weak and under-subscribed graduate programs. Powell (1987) emphasized the importance of being "careful not to create 'centers of excellence' in name only" but to create centers that really are excellent (Powell, 1987, p. 18). Allen (1987) writes that "stimulating quality improvements in graduate education and research requires tact and sustained advocacy on the part of the graduate dean who has few tools other than those of consultation and negotiation" (p. 67). Allen's (1987) view is that the "primary responsibility of the graduate dean is to stimulate and encourage faculty research and scholarship, for they are synonymous with graduate education" (p. 70).

Stewart (2000), the current president of the CGS, recalled a time in 1988 when the chancellor of the institution where she was working introduced her as "our dean without her faculties" (p. 1). Deans without portfolios or deans without line budgets are other descriptions of graduate deans according to Stewart (2000, p. 1). Stewart's (2000) view

is that "the faculty often defend us as the 'moral authority' of the university" (p. 1). Stewart (2000) emphasized that the graduate dean is a "relationship builder" in the following comment:

> Graduate deans typically do not deal in the currency of traditional authority, control over resources, people, time, and budgets, as the means to advance academic program objectives. Rather, the graduate dean advances the graduate agenda by serving as a relationship builder. Effective graduate deanship is marked by a capacity to identify and nurture relationships to advance shared goals among faculty, collegiate deans, fellow administrators, students, and staff. The key word here is constituent; for, to a graduate dean, wherever he or she sits in the organizational hierarchy, everyone is a constituent (p. 1).

Hoving, Woodruff, and Musacchia (1989) also described the changing role of the graduate dean. They attributed the changing role to the many responsibilities that graduate deans are asked to oversee, including the interaction between universities and the business and industrial sector, growth of nontraditional programs, growth of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary centers, graduate recruitment, university and economic development and diversification, and involvement in fundraising. Overall, Hoving, Woodruff, and Musacchia (1989) believed that the graduate dean is less personally involved with graduate students and faculty and more involved with the graduate research arena and the world outside of the university.

CGS believes that the role of the Graduate School in the University is to "define and support excellence in graduate education, and the research and scholarly activities

associated with it" (CGS, 2004c). CGS (2004c) defines the role of the graduate school in this way:

- Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community
- Provide quality control over all aspects of graduate education
- Maintain equity across all academic disciplines
- Define what graduate education is and what it is not
- Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors
- Provide an interdisciplinary perspective
- Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty
- Serve as an advocate for graduate education
- Emphasize the institution-wide importance of training future college and university teachers
- Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education
- Support and further the non-academic interests of graduate students
- Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs (p. 4-9).

The graduate organizational structure varies at every university. This may have occurred because of the history of graduate education. Originally, universities were serving undergraduates and only later was graduate education added to their responsibilities. At some institutions, there is an office of graduate education while at others there is a graduate school. Individuals responsible for

graduate education have varying position titles. Whatever the title, CGS (2004c) recommended that each university have a "single individual who is the chief academic officer for graduate education" (p. 11). CGS (2004c) also recommended eight structural elements, in addition to the chief academic officer. The following structural elements may be combined in an office or overlap with existing academic units, but according to CGS (2004c) they should be present at every university. They include:

- A governing board and administration that support graduate education
- Basic faculty units that supervise graduate study and recommend degrees
- Faculty committed to graduate programs and research
- A chief academic officer for graduate education
- A separate degree-granting graduate unit
- A graduate program director in each academic unit
- A graduate council
- Graduate student representation (p. 10-13).

The preceding list begs the question: Does the structure of graduate education impact the outcomes of the educational programs? Some institutions allow various schools within the university to administer graduate programs. According to Stewart (1959), this practice "can easily lead—and frequently does—to a diversity of academic standards within a single university and to superior and inferior degrees within the same institution. Professional degrees are admittedly different in purpose from academic, or

research, degrees, but they should not be inferior to them" (p. 137). Benoit, Mohr, and Shabb (2004) discussed whether clinical programs should be placed under the "graduate school umbrella" stating that "the intent of graduate education has traditionally been to advance ideas or principles through research and scholarly activity. Clinicians, on the other hand, are expected to be consumers of research who use the primary literature to improve patient care" (p. 47).

Sanford (1978) challenged the organizational structure of graduate education, because a student going from the bachelor's to the master's or the master's to the Ph.D. is not a routine process. She pointed out that "this transformation process is nonroutine, nonuniform, with many exceptions, and has a high degree of uncertainty" (Sanford, 1978, p. 13). She emphasized that the administrative structure of graduate education tends to be sequential and standardized. Sanford (1978) argued that this structure does not fit because "mechanisms that are appropriate for routine technologies (main tasks) are being used for nonroutine technologies" (p. 14). Sanford (1978) uses the word technology to mean "main task" (p. 13). She suggested that a flexible structure would better fit graduate education since in her opinion, "the nonroutine, intensive type of technology of the graduate school, and the turbulence, uncertainty, and dynamism of the environment would suggest an organic system" (Sanford, 1978, p. 18).

Centralized and Decentralized Graduate Education

Centralized graduate education has been preferred by CGS since its formation. As reported by Pennings (1990), the 1980 CGS publication *The Organization and Administration of Graduate Education* outlined several drawbacks to decentralized systems including: "communication gaps," the lack of a central point of data collection;

the potential for viewing "graduate programs as isolated parts rather than as an integrated system;" the difficulty with " a blurring of boundaries" between what is "'graduate' and 'professional' education;" and lastly raises the point that when issues cannot be centralized there tends to be a lack of communication about the issues of graduate education with the university president (p. 23-24). The CGS 2004 publication with the same title recommended, as it did in 1980 and 1990, that "the needs and concerns of graduate education are best served when its administration is carried out through a central university office" (CGS, 2004c, p. 2).

Pugh, Hickson, Hinings, and Turner (1968) state that "centralization has to do with the locus of authority" or in other words, who is the last person whose agreement must be obtained before legitimate action is taken? (p. 76). When graduate schools mail out the acceptance letter to students notifying their acceptance to graduate school, is the letter coming from the program or from the dean? If the letter comes from the dean then this would indicate a centralized process with the graduate dean holding final authority for accepting students.

Chaffee (1983) pointed out that "centralization and decentralization are generally thought to designate the opposite ends of a continuum that ranges from one person at or near the top of the hierarchy making a decision (centralization) to a person or a group at or near the action level making the decision (decentralization)" (p.53). However, she challenged this idea and recommended that one consider other factors such as "breadth of participation and numbers of administrative versus non administrative people involved" (Chaffee, 1983, p. 53). If one considers the admissions processes at many institutions, one would find that decisions to admit students are very often the decision of the

program. This is a decentralized process that can take place within a centralized structure. The department can decide who gets admitted and then can forward the names on to the central unit who then notifies the student of their acceptance or denial. Chaffee (1983) put forth the premise that "both decision theory and common sense have suggested that authority to make strategic decisions should be centralized in top administration, that authority to make operational decisions should be decentralized to the affected subunits, and that the authority to make tactical decisions may appropriately vary from one situation to another" (Chaffee, 1983, p. 56). What are strategic, tactical, and operational decisions? Strategic decisions answer the question, "What are we doing or going to do?" while tactical decisions help answer the question, "How are we going to do it?" and operational decisions discuss "Who will do what?" (Chaffee, 1983, p. 56).

Centralization in organizations may mean monitoring and acting as a clearinghouse rather than being completely in authority. Edelson (1995) discussed centralized "coordination" at the provost's level instead of "control" of decision-making (p. 153). For graduate deans to act as a coordinator rather than someone in authority may be more appropriate. Certainly the coordinator model became evident in this study as all of the graduate deans worked to insure that minimum standards were met across campus units. They were advocates for students as policies were developed and at all times graduate deans were guarding standards and working to achieve academic excellence.

History of Graduate Education at the University of North Dakota

The Dakota Territorial Assembly founded the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks in 1883, six years before North Dakota became a state. Giving the address when the cornerstone was laid on October 2, 1883 was D.L. Kiehle, superintendent of

Public Instruction for the state of Minnesota. Kiehle spoke about the need for a generous curriculum" which would stress the "mental, moral, and social nature of man" (Smith, 1998, p. 119). Four faculty and 11 students entered the University on September 8, 1884 (University of North Dakota Academic Catalog, 2001-2003, p. 2). Of these "only seven were qualified to do work beyond the elementary level and none beyond high school" (Geiger, 1958, p. 36). Eventually 79 enrolled that first year and none were classified as ready for college (Geiger, 1958). President Blackburn was an advocate of admitting to the University "practically everyone who applied and providing instruction on whatever level proved necessary" (Geiger, 1958, p. 43).

Despite their academic deficits, no student was dismissed for poor academic performance, "although one or two were advised to discontinue and a half dozen were threatened with suspensions for excessive absences" (Geiger, 1958, p. 40). The university was made up of one building and "had neither furnace nor storm windows and was heated by several small stoves. Drinking water had to be carried in barrels from town; laundry and bathing water drawn from the coulee behind the building and students and faculty shared outdoor privies" (Smith, 1998, p. 125-126). Similar to other 19th century frontier colleges, UND established preparatory departments, since high schools in the state of North Dakota were unavailable or inadequate (Smith, 1998). Smith (1998) described the situation at the University of Minnesota in 1870 where only half of its 300 students were qualified to enroll in the "college department" with the rest enrolling either in the "Latin School" or could not be classified at all and received basic instruction in mathematics and English grammar (p. 126).

This history is important to this dissertation because President Blackburn's difficulties during his first year at the University of North Dakota centered on standards. The standards Blackburn wanted to follow and the standards of the board were not in alignment. In the founding year at the University of North Dakota, two faculty members, Webster Merrifield and Henry Montgomery (who have buildings named after them today) planned "three courses of study; one built around Greek and Latin, another around modern languages, and a third around a miscellany of history, political economy, and science" (Smith, 1998, p. 127). Despite Blackburn's belief in classical studies, he viewed the curriculum that Merrifield and Montgomery had developed as impractical. Blackburn wanted to adopt a more practical approach, but he was not able to convince the Board of this. The Board undermined his authority, rejecting his recommendations for the curriculum. In December 1884, the Board reduced his role, making the faculty responsible to the Board rather than Blackburn. Two local newspapers, the *Plaindealer* and the *Herald*, were supportive of Blackburn's more practical curriculum (Geiger, 1958). As cited by Geiger (1958) The *Herald* published the following question in the spring of 1885 when the curriculum was being discussed and Blackburn was being dismissed by the Board:

> Is the university to be built as an American institution or shall it be run in a cramming, dry-as-dust, stilted 50-years-behind the times, dead-and-gone style...? Is it a fight of plain, common-sense education adapted to the wants of a new population against the setting of a standard, a stilted curriculum so high that before you could enter the walls of the institution you would have to be trained at Oxford...our university must walk before it can run (Geiger, 1958, p. 43).

The matters regarding the curriculum and admissions practices were not the only issues for Blackburn. He was also a Presbyterian minister and made public appearances in his role as minister. Smith (1998) described Blackburn's belief in Christian scripture as representing the "appropriate starting point in the quest for truth, knowledge and beauty" (p. 142). Some of the members of the Board did not approve of his ties with the church. Blackburn was dismissed from the University of North Dakota after just one year as president.

The first class graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1889. The Master of Arts degree was inaugurated in 1894 (Geiger, 1958, p. 120). The year's graduate program consisted of "one advanced course in a major subject, two minor courses in regular subjects not previously taken, a thesis, and a final general examination" (Geiger, 1958, p. 120). The first master's degree was awarded to Harrison Bronson (B.A., 1894) of Grand Forks in 1895 (Geiger, 1958, p. 120). His major course was Latin, one of his minor courses was Greek, and his thesis was a study of Greek life as shown in the plays of Terence (Geiger, 1958, p. 120). It was not until 1900 that two more Master of Arts degrees were awarded (Geiger, 1958, p. 120). In 1907, the program for the Master of Arts degree offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Teachers College was formalized and students were to work under a faculty committee with the requirement that the major course work be "designed primarily for graduates" (Geiger, 1958, p. 176). Graduate training was formalized and expanded with the help of the Board of Trustees when they allocated funds for graduate scholarships and fellowships to "stimulate research and genuine scholarship" in 1910 (Geiger, 1958, p. 212). Three general fellowships of $300.00, one $400.00 industrial fellowship, and three $150.00

fellowships were awarded each year (Geiger, 1958, p. 212). It was at this time that the catalog devoted a separate section to the nine departments offering the Master of Arts degree in chemistry, biology, economics, political science, English, geology, history, Romance Languages, and sociology (Geiger, 1958, p. 212). Each of the departments, except for Sociology, listed only two graduate courses. Sociology had three graduate courses listed in the catalog (Geiger, 1958, p. 212).

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accredited the University of North Dakota in 1913, the same year the association was organized, and it has been continuously accredited since then (University of North Dakota, 2003-2005, p. 3). The first Ph.D. was conferred in 1914 upon George R. Davies, who had worked in the departments of sociology and history (Geiger, 1958, p. 211). The first doctor of Education degree (Ed.D.) was conferred in June 1930 to John C. West, then superintendent of the Grand Forks schools. West became President of the University in 1933 (Geiger, 1958, p. 382). The first female to receive her Ph.D. from the University was Clara L. Leum in 1937 (Rylance, 1981, p. 1).

The graduate department became a separate division in 1927, with Joseph V. Breitwieser serving as graduate division director and Dean of the School of Education (Geiger, 1958, p. 356). A small budget was allotted to the graduate division. Breitwieser adopted broad regulations for the Ph.D. and Ed.D. Admission of candidates became the decision of an advisory committee and the graduate division director who examined the merits of each applicant and considered the University's resources for training the candidate (Geiger, 1958, p. 357). "Customary regulations for the doctorate: residence and foreign language requirements, preliminary and final exams, the approval

of a major and minor program" were defined in 1930 (Geiger, 1958, p. 358). The University did not have much in the way of resources in the 1930s. The library held fewer than 75,000 books, which included 14,000 volumes on the law. No money was appropriated for research, with the exception of $5,000 annually for lignite testing and another $2,000 for ceramics. Still, graduate programs, especially in geology and speech, were expanded in the 1930s. The difficulty with expansion was that it seemed to affect standards. In a report published in 1934 on the quality of the doctorate degrees at various universities, "the Committee on Graduate Instruction of the American Council on Education failed to list a single department of the University of North Dakota" (Geiger, 1958, p. 359). Indeed, the University was not mentioned at all in the report. So, while the university expanded the number of graduate programs, the faculty or equipment was not adequate in the eyes of the American Council on Education despite the fact that it was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

In 1951, the graduate division was advanced from the status of a part-time director to the status of a school with its own dean, Daryle Keefer. Dean Keefer reorganized the graduate catalog and worked with a faculty committee to tighten a number of the procedures for advanced study, including requirements for course work and for oral and written exams (Geiger, 1958, p. 433). The number of advanced degrees grew from 46 in 1931-32 to 111 in 1956-57 (Geiger, 1958, p. 432). Research programs also were developed. In 1948, the School of Medicine had sponsored almost no research, but between 1950 and 1957, the medical school received at least $650,000 in research grants. From 1948 to 1957, faculty and graduate students in the medical school published 170 articles and papers in professional journals (Geiger, 1958, p. 434). The department

of biochemistry, headed by William E. Cornatzer, published more than forty of those 170 articles (Geiger, 1958, p. 434).

A focus on graduate education and research helped with the growth of the university. In 1957, 225 students or 1% of the university population were enrolled in graduate school compared to 666 or 11% of the university population in 1964 (University of North Dakota, 1965, p. 1). A total of 268 individuals received advanced degrees during the 1963-64 academic year. This was a record high for the University. Nationally, graduate education was growing as well (University of North Dakota, 1965, p. 1).

The structure of graduate education at UND was confirmed on May 2, 1963 when the Graduate Faculty, and its authority over the Graduate School was formally established by the University Senate through the Graduate Faculty Constitution (University of North Dakota, 1983, p. 9). The constitution has been revised three times, once in 1982, again in 1996 and most recently in 2002.

In the 1970-72 University of North Dakota Undergraduate Bulletin thirty-six departments offered work leading to the master's degree and 13 offered doctorate degrees (UND Catalog 1970-72, p. 111). The 1978-80 UND Undergraduate Bulletin listed the number of fields offering the master's degree as forty-one while those offering doctoral degrees had increased from 13 to 16 (UND Undergraduate Bulletin 1978-80). In a 1980 unpublished report entitled, "Synopsis of the UND Graduate School" it was reported that in 1979, 274 master's degrees, 3 specialist's diplomas, and 62 doctorate degrees were awarded (University of North Dakota, 1980, p. 1). An August 29, 1979 report of the same name pointed out the need for more faculty resources (University of North Dakota,

1979, p. 1). The report stated that the ratio of 1:12 (one full-time equivalent faculty to 12 full-time equivalent students) needed to be changed to a minimum of 1:9. In 1979, UND ranked 110 out of 270 institutions awarding the doctorate in the United States (University of North Dakota, 1979, p. 1). The 1982-84 Undergraduate Bulletin reported that approximately 300 students received master's degrees and 50 students received doctoral degrees (1982-84 Undergraduate Bulletin, p. 96).

A "Planning Summary Update" written by UND Graduate Dean A. William Johnson listed several specific goals to achieve during the 1984-1989 time period. These goals related to standards and were designed to,

- Encourage the setting of higher priorities for research and creative accomplishment among the faculty.
- Continue to increase the attraction of top quality students to UND graduate programs.
- Continue the review of graduate programs in order to (a) ensure the maintenance of quality standards, (b) to identify needs and opportunities for improving existing programs, and (c) to identify needs and opportunities for developing new programs or re-focusing existing programs.
- Encourage improvement in the capability of departments to offer strong graduate programs (Johnson, 1984, p.2- p.3).

In a 1991 report entitled, "The Future of Graduate Education at UND" the mission statement for the UND Graduate School was articulated. It is similar to the goals that

were developed in the 1980s, and highlighted the importance of standards and quality graduate programs:

1. To provide opportunity for scholarly and creative specialization through study for advanced degrees in the departments, schools, and colleges of the University.
2. To provide opportunity for advanced degrees by those practicing the professions or simply pursuing a higher level of personal education.
3. To safeguard and promote standards of excellence in graduate study.
4. To promote the development of research and creative activities, for the purpose of:
    a. supporting quality graduate study;
    b. contributing ideas and knowledge to society at large and North Dakota in particular;
    c. developing a faculty capable of providing expert service to the public and the private sector (UND Graduate Committee, 1991, p. 1-2).

The 1990s and 2000s continued to bring growth to graduate education at UND. In 1992, there were 47 programs offering the master's degree and 16 fields offering the doctoral degree with approximately 400 new students a year enrolling in graduate education at the University (University of North Dakota, 1992, p. 100). During the 1997-98 academic year 411 master's degrees, 5 specialist diplomas, and 40 doctorates were awarded (University of North Dakota, 1999, p. 165). Enrollment in the Graduate School increased by 6-10 percent in the two-year period of 2001 and 2003 (Batson & Hess, 2003, p. 105).

The University of North Dakota continues to be accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In addition, most individual colleges, schools, and departments that have accrediting associations in their respective fields are fully accredited programs. The last North Central Association accreditation visit was during the 2003-2004 academic year. Recent recommendations from the Higher Learning Commission specific to graduate education focused on having enough resources available for doctoral programs. The Commission pointed out that "some graduate programs are producing only one or two graduates a year, but the institution has increased from 15 to 21 the number of doctoral programs offered." The Commission cautioned that "over-extension in any major area can retard progress toward strategic institutional goals" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 21). Based on this recommendation, the UND Graduate School should work with current programs to recruit students and ensure success among the students that are currently in programs. Another recommendation of the Commission focused on assessment of student learning and noted that "general education and graduate education do not appear to be included consistently in assessment planning and activities" (Higher Learning Commission, 2003, p. 18). Assessment of student learning in graduate programs should be given a high priority in the course of program review and course evaluation.

Background to the study in areas that relate to standards was presented in Chapter II. The background to the study assists the reader in putting this in the context of current trends and former traditions. A discussion of the history of master's and doctoral education, and the movement towards standards and accreditation was presented. The role of the graduate dean and graduate school was discussed including an overview of the

history of graduate education at the University of North Dakota. The definitions of centralized and decentralized education were included. Graduate deans serve as coordinators ensuring that minimum standards are met across the campus. Chapter III will provide a description of the overall research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In Chapter III the overall research design and methodology used in the study is described. Specifically addressed in this chapter is the research design, the population and sample in the study, the selection of participants, the data collection procedures used, and the data analysis selected. The study was guided by a set of interview questions that were developed to help understand the role of the dean. Even though questions had been developed in advance, each interview took its own direction.

Research Design

The primary method of investigating the role of the graduate dean was grounded theory, a qualitative research method designed to aid in generating or discovering a theory that relates to a particular situation (Creswell, 1998, p. 56). The data analysis was based on transcriptions of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with ten graduate deans at ten different institutions of higher education. Each dean's responses to a case study were also analyzed. Additionally, follow-up e-mail messages assisted in clarifying something a dean had said. Creswell (1998) described this type of data collection in a grounded theory study as a "'zigzag' process—out to the field to gather information, analyze the data, back to the field to gather more information, analyze the data, and so forth" (p. 57). According to Creswell (1998), a research question in a qualitative study often starts with a "how or a what so that initial forays into the topic describe what is going on" (p. 17).

This study examined what the role of the graduate dean is at American universities. Themes emerged from the deans' interviews that helped to describe their role.

The Grounded Theory

This study is "grounded" in the data from the interviews with the ten graduate deans. The researcher wanted to discover what the role of the dean is in graduate education. In analyzing the data, it became clear that three issues that deans talked about most frequently were petitions, policies, and program development. These became the three major categories.

After the categories and themes are discussed, the data are presented in an axial coding paradigm. In axial coding, the researcher assembles the data in new ways after open coding (Creswell, 1998, p. 57). The central phenomenon (see Definition of Terms in Chapter I) is identified within the context of the study. Additionally, the causal conditions, intervening conditions, the strategies, and consequences are discussed (see Definition of Terms in Chapter I.)

Population and Sample

The population of all graduate schools would be a very large group to study, totaling approximately 1,700 graduate degree-granting institutions in the United States (Council of Graduate Schools, 2002). Thus, the sample for this study was the graduate dean at UND and at the nine institutions identified by the North Dakota University System as UND's peers. This provided a smaller sample and a logical group to study.

Peer Selection

The peer institution selection process for the University of North Dakota resulted from the efforts of many individuals and groups. According to a September 27, 2000

report by the North Dakota University System, the 1999 North Dakota Legislative Assembly passed a resolution directing that a study be conducted which would, "address the expectations of the North Dakota University System in meeting the state's needs in the twenty-first century, the funding methodology needed to meet these expectation and needs, and an accountability system and reporting methodology for the University System" (North Dakota University System Resource Allocation Mechanism Peer Selection Criteria, 2000, p. 1). As a result of this resolution, the Administrative Affairs Subcommittee recommended a peer comparison model (Alice Brekke, personal communication, January 29, 2003).

A funding mechanism was developed based on three primary budgetary components: base funding, incentive funding, and asset funding (North Dakota University System Resource Allocation Mechanism Peer Selection Criteria, 2000, p. 1). Base funding would be used to sustain the academic capacity of each campus. The legislative assembly agreed that the adequacy of the base funding for each institution in the state could be measured by comparison to other external benchmarks, such as peer institutions in other states. Thus, in 2000 and 2001, the consultant and a task force on each campus within the North Dakota University System developed a list of peer institutions. Dennis Jones, from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), was the consultant working with the NDUS to help identify peer institutions. A list of peers was developed based on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys and additional data provided by the universities. There are five IPEDS surveys administered by the National Center for Education Statistics including: completions, fall enrollment, finance, institutional characteristics,

and fall staff (North Dakota University System Resource Allocation Mechanism Peer Selection Criteria, 2000, p. 6-7). These data were compared to the total student Full Time Enrollment for each university. After these analyses were completed, the original draft list of ten peers included East Carolina University, East Tennessee State University, Marshall University, Ohio University—Main Campus, Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville, University of Louisville, University of Missouri—Kansas City, University of South Alabama, University of South Dakota, and Wright State University—Main Campus (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems National Center for Education Statistics Finance Dataset, 1997-98, p. 1).

Final Sample

After the original draft list of peers was generated, it was decided by the UND committee that peer institutions should have a medical school. The committee also recommended that the list include some "aspirational peers" or institutions that UND aspires to model. Land-grant institutions were excluded although UND's statewide mission and service function was considered to be comparable to them. North Dakota State University is North Dakota's land-grant institution. Consultation with deans and librarians on the campus identified institutions that were already being used for comparison models and as a result, institutions that operate under a National Science Foundation program called, "Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research" (EPSCoR) were considered. The final list included doctoral-degree-granting public institutions, classified as Doctoral/Research Universities Extensive and Intensive through the Carnegie Classification system. A list was generated based on enrollment and research focus: if enrollment was greater than 25,000 FTE, it was eliminated. In

addition, if extramural funding for research was greater than $200 million, or the ratio of research to instruction was greater than one, the institution was eliminated (Alice Brekke, personal communication, January 29, 2003).

The final peer list included Southern Illinois University—Carbondale, SUNY at Buffalo, University of Louisville, University of Missouri—Kansas City, University of Nevada—Reno, University of South Carolina, Wright State University, Ohio University, and West Virginia University. UND and these nine peer institutions comprised the sample to this study.

Data Collection

Pilot Study

In a pilot study the researcher set out to understand how three deans perceived their role regarding issues of enrollment, including recruitment and retention, and program development. The pilot study included two former graduate deans, who were currently deans at Texas A&M Corpus Christi and Northern Arizona University-Flagstaff. The pilot study also included the dean from the University of North Dakota. A preliminary analysis of whether the role of the dean varied in a centralized versus a decentralized school was originally planned, but one of the three schools that appeared to have a decentralized structure was moving in the direction of centralizing the activities of the graduate school, and the other two were already centralized structures. Thus, comparisons could not be made.

In the pilot study, program review became a central issue since when the deans were asked whether they could think of other processes they influenced, two of the three responded "program review." After conducting the pilot study, questions were

reworded for clarity and organization. Transcribing the interviews was helpful to the interviewer in gaining some perspective on interviewing skills. Experience gained with the Ethnograph software was also useful. Each interview was treated as a separate file in Ethnograph. Initially, each file was reformatted using the numbering feature, which allows each line of text to be numbered.

After the files from the pilot study were reformatted using the numbering feature and saved, the transcripts were read several times. Transcripts were coded with key words to describe passages. A list of topics or codes was easy to generate, but it became quite lengthy. A dean's relationship with his/her provost was noted with themes underneath this main topic including "supportive provost," " provost creating community," and "provost as representative of the academic community." The code "graduate students" brought out themes such as "retention," "bonding to programs," "mentoring," "graduation rate," "admission process critical to enrollment," and "capping enrollment," The code "working with faculty" brought out themes including "communication," "team building," "support for faculty recruiting," "overextended faculty," "capping enrollments," and "new program ideas." The codes for the final study were different than those identified in the pilot study, but the pilot study experience was extremely helpful as it provided an opportunity to learn research skills and make improvements to the study's final design.

Participants in the Sample

Ten graduate deans participated in this study. The graduate dean from the University of North Dakota (UND) and deans from the University's nine identified peer institutions were interviewed. All participants were leaders in graduate education at their

institutions, however, they hold different titles and many have dual roles assigned. Only three of the participants held the title of Graduate Dean. Two of the graduate deans interviewed were also the Vice Chancellor or Vice Provost for Research, two were either the Associate Provost or Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, one was the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, and one held the title of Director of Graduate Education. One participant was the Associate Dean who had been referred by the Dean and Provost of the institution. Peer institutions included: Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU-C), University at Buffalo: The State University of New York (SUNY-B), University of Louisville (UL), University of Missouri—Kansas City (UM-KC), University of Nevada-Reno (UN-R), University of South Carolina (USC), Wright State University (WSU), Ohio University (OU), and West Virginia University (WVU).

Of these interviews, six were conducted face-to-face and four were conducted over the telephone. Four of the face-to-face interviews were conducted at the Council of Graduate Schools' (CGS) annual meeting held in San Francisco, California in December 2003. One face-to-face interview took place at the Western Association of Graduate Schools (WAGS) regional meeting held in March 2004 in Phoenix, Arizona. The sixth face-to-face interview took place in the Dean's office at UND. Telephone interviews were conducted with the deans who did not attend the national or regional CGS meetings. All participants signed the Institutional Review Board consent form (Appendix A) prior to the interview. All participants of the study agreed to allow their institution to be identified in the study. None of the responses were identified with a particular institution; therefore the reader cannot match the comments of a participant with an institution. A brief biographical sketch of the deans that were interviewed follows.

Dean One: A microbiologist by training, Dean One has been at his institution for 30 years, but graduate dean for four and a half years at the time of the interview. Dean One filled the position of graduate dean when it was removed from the research office. The president of the institution and a committee looking at the issues of graduate education felt that for the dean to be overseeing the growth in research and increasing the graduate student population was too much so they removed graduate dean responsibilities from the research office. Over these 30 years, Dean One had other administrative posts including chair of his department, serving as associate dean for arts and sciences, and he serving as head of an institute for the university for a few years. He is active nationally in his field.

Dean Two: Prior to his administrative duties, Dean Two worked exclusively in the field of music. After he served as director of a school of music at one institution and associate director at another, he became the arts and letters dean for a third institution. The university where he was dean of arts and letters had merged three separate colleges of arts and letters, social sciences, and mathematics into a single college to better serve their undergraduate population. He left that assignment to become the vice provost for academic affairs and dean of the graduate school a position which, at the time of the interview, he had held for three years.

Dean Three: Dean Three will have been at his institution for 32 years at the end of 2004. His academic discipline is materials science and engineering. He began as a faculty member in the Physics department, then moved to the Materials Science department where he was program director and department chair, then graduate dean and research vice president. At the time of the interview, he had been in his current position

as dean for 14 years. As part of his current responsibilities, he oversees the research function of the university. His current title is dean, School of Graduate Studies and vice president for research.

Dean Four: Thirty years ago, Dean Four started at her institution in the department of Nutrition. She progressed through the ranks to full professor. At one point she served as interim department chair and then became the department chair, a position she held for five years. She also had been interim dean of her college for half a year. At the time of the interview she had served as associate dean of the graduate school for four years. The associate dean reports to the vice president for research and graduate dean.

Dean Five: Dean Five will have been at his institution for 17 years. When interviewed he was just completing his first year as associate provost for graduate studies. Prior to being appointed associate provost, he was chair of the political science department for five years. He worked with eight other deans who directed graduate programs on the campus.

Dean Six: Dean Six has been at his institution the longest of anyone interviewed for the study. He has been at the University since 1965 and he is currently 50% associate chair of the department of Biochemistry and Molecular Pharmacology and 50% director of graduate education. When interviewed, he had served as the director of graduate education since 1992, with a three-year break in the middle, equaling 9 total years of service in the position.

Dean Seven: Beginning as an assistant professor in Chemistry 30 years ago, Dean Seven moved up the ranks and became the chair of his department eight years after he started. He got involved with a project for the Chancellor and for three years helped

develop a new school focused on the biological sciences. He became interim dean and was head of the biology division, in the school he had helped establish, for a total of ten years. Approximately five years into that 10-year job, he became the graduate dean on an interim basis. Holding multiple titles, he was division head, graduate dean and vice provost for research. He has held the position of dean and associate provost for research for eight years at the time of the interview.

Dean Eight: A professor of political science who focuses on Russian politics/Russian law, Dean Eight has been at his institution for 25 years. He was appointed dean of the graduate school and associate provost on May 1, 2001, so he had been in the position slightly over two and a half years at the time of the interview. Prior to being dean of the graduate school and associate provost, he was associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and he served as interim dean of the college of liberal arts for one year.

Dean Nine: Dean Nine, a chemist, had been at his institution for 20 years. He had been vice chancellor for research and graduate dean for four and a half years at the time of the interview. Prior to this, he was chair of the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department.

Dean Ten: Serving in his role as graduate dean for almost four years, at the time of the interview, Dean Ten holds a Ph.D. in the basic sciences with an emphasis in Physiology. Prior to becoming graduate dean, he was a professor of physiology and directed graduate studies at another institution from 1995 to 2001. In that capacity, he reported to the Senior Associate Dean for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School. He was at a medical center from 1987 to 1995.

Institutions in the Sample

Of the ten institutions in the sample, the University of North Dakota has the smallest graduate enrollment with 1,800 graduate students. Both the University of South Carolina and the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York enroll approximately 7,000 graduate students. The average graduate enrollment of the ten schools is 4,380. Seven of the ten institutions are classified by the Carnegie Classification as Doctoral Research/Extensive and three are Doctoral Research/ Intensive. Table 1 shows the graduate enrollment and Carnegie Classification for all of the institutions in the sample. "E" represents Doctoral Research/Extensive and "I" represents Doctoral Research/Intensive.

Table 1. Graduate Enrollment and Carnegie Classification for Institutions in Sample.

Institutions in Sample	Number of Graduate Students	Carnegie Classification
Ohio University	3000	E
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	4300	E
State University of New York --Buffalo	9000	E
University of Louisville	6000	E
University of Missouri –Kansas City	3000	I
University of North Dakota	1800	I
University of Nevada-Reno	3000	E
University of South Carolina	7000	E
Wright State University	3200	I
West Virginia University	5500	E

A brief description of each of the ten institutions in this study follows.

(1) Ohio University (OU): At Ohio University colleges have considerable flexibility to work within a number of university guidelines that are directed by a university-wide curriculum committee. According to their website, they list fifteen staff members. Program review, student recruitment, graduate program development, graduate applications, minority recruitment and retention, graduate stipend contracts and tuition

scholarships, the individual interdisciplinary program, and policies related to graduate studies are all coordinated within the Graduate Studies office. While students apply to the Graduate Studies office, individual degree programs actually admit students. There are approximately 3,000 graduate students enrolled. Ohio University is classified as a doctoral research/extensive university.

(2) Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIU-C): Classified by the Carnegie Classification as a doctoral research/extensive university, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale offers 58 master's and 36 doctoral programs with more than 4,300 graduate students. SIU-C is primarily a decentralized graduate school since departments play a large role in the recruitment and admittance of graduate students. Graduate instruction and research are the primary concerns of the graduate school. They list 19 staff members and seven administrators within the graduate school on their website. Their staff members are involved with admissions, assistantships, records, registration, and teacher assistant training. Acceptance to graduate school is awarded by the department, with the graduate school serving as a final check to ensure minimum requirements and standards have been met.

(3) University at Buffalo, The State University of New York (SUNY-B): With approximately 7,000 graduate students, SUNY at Buffalo has a highly decentralized structure within graduate education. The associate provost and executive director of the graduate school is responsible for supervision of all administrative functions and operations and reports to the vice provost and dean. There are eight staff members who report to the vice provost and dean. The SUNY-B is classified as doctoral research/extensive university.

(4) University of Louisville (UL): The Graduate School has approximately 18 staff members to coordinate the graduate degree programs at the University. The Graduate School has an established minimum admissions standard and awards the acceptance to the graduate student so in many respects it is centralized. The University of Louisville enrolls more than 6,000 graduate students and is classified as a doctoral research/extensive university.

(5) University of Missouri-Kansas City (UM-KC): With over 3,000 graduate students, this institution is classified as a doctoral research /intensive. It has a decentralized model of graduate education. The academic units, the schools, colleges, and departments have autonomy over their programs. The role of the School of Graduate Studies is to provide oversight and to set policies and procedures that apply to graduate students. The School of Graduate Studies also employs six staff members and serves as the academic home for students admitted to the Ph.D. program in Interdisciplinary Studies. Thus, programs under Interdisciplinary Studies are centralized.

(6) University of North Dakota (UND): A centralized graduate school employing nine staff members who work with students from admission to graduation. All graduate appointments, programs of study, and topic proposals come through the Graduate School for final approval by the dean. Approximately 1,800 graduate students are enrolled in the 57 programs offered. This institution holds the doctoral research/intensive classification.

(7) University of Nevada-Reno (UN-R): More than 3,000 graduate students attend the University of Nevada-Reno in more than 65 graduate degree programs. Classified as doctoral research/extensive, this graduate school has both centralized and decentralized processes. The graduate school oversees an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program while all of

the other graduate programs report to their respective academic deans. The letter of acceptance to graduate programs comes from the Graduate School. There were seven members on the staff at the time of the interview with an eighth to be hired. The staff consisted of three admissions officers—two domestic admissions officers and one international officer, an administrative assistant, a day-to-day coordinator, an assistantship coordinator and a graduate student association coordinator.

(8) University of South Carolina (USC): With just under 7,000 graduate students, all degree programs report to the dean with three exceptions: the Juris Doctor program in the Law School, the Doctor of Medicine in the Medical School, and the Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Classified as a doctoral research/extensive, they are primarily centralized. The programs set their own admission standards, subject to approval by the Graduate School. Their website listed 17 staff members, including the dean and were divided into three areas: graduate admissions, extended graduate campus and the graduate dean's office.

(9) Wright State University (WSU): Wright State has over 3,200 graduate students and is part of the doctoral research/intensive classification. The School of Graduate Studies offers five Ph.D. programs, 40 master's degree programs, and one post-master's educational specialist degree. There are seven staff members in the graduate school and eleven in the research office. The final admittance offer to graduate students comes from the School of Graduate Studies. There are decentralized processes in other areas.

(10) West Virginia University (WVU): Graduate education at WVU is under the advisement of a director where central policy issues on graduate education are established within the graduate council. There is no office of graduate studies but rather a director

who has an administrative assistant. It is a highly decentralized structure in that every degree program handles its own admissions processes and oversees degree requirements. If students have questions, they are directed to their departments. With approximately 5,500 graduate students, the institution is classified as a doctoral research/extensive.

Data Collection

Nine graduate deans were contacted via e-mail asking them to participate in a study on the role of the graduate dean. The tenth dean in the study, from the University of North Dakota, where I was located, was interviewed a second time in the dean's office, since the questions and the format of the interview had changed from the pilot study. Appendix A contains a letter that was e-mailed to the deans asking for their participation. Early in the study, I had sent an e-mail message out to participants who potentially would attend MAGS (Appendix B). When I sent the message to deans who belonged to MAGS (Appendix B), I had not determined fully that I would be studying the role of the dean. I initially had considered trying to determine if centralized or decentralized graduate education was more effective. Thus the e-mail message to MAGS members is a bit different than the e-mail that all of the participants received (Appendix A)

In two instances, contact needed to be made with administrative staff of the deans in order to gain a telephone interview. Face-to-face interviews were arranged with four of the deans at the CGS annual meeting held December 2003 in San Francisco, California. Two of these four interviews were scheduled with the help of the deans' administrative assistants. One of the deans in the study, who was the vice president for research along with being graduate dean, referred me to her associate dean who was attending a regional CGS meeting. In an e-mail it was explained to me that the associate

dean was responsible for the "operation of the graduate school". The associate dean had three full-time coordinators: one coordinator took care of the day-to day activities of the graduate school, one who was responsible for training teaching assistants, and another who advised the graduate student association. The vice president for research and graduate dean had an office in a different location that the graduate school. In my opinion, the associate dean was at similar levels to the other deans in the study. Four interviews were conducted over the telephone with a speaker telephone so that the interview could be audio taped.

The questions and case study were attached to the initial e-mail so that the deans could review them to see what type of questions they were going to be asked. Before the deans were interviewed, the informed consent form (Appendix C) that explains the purpose, duration, and benefits of the study was given to them to sign. In the case of the telephone interviews, the consent form was faxed to them, signed by them, and faxed back to the researcher. Confidentiality of the respondents was guaranteed, since their names were not identified and no responses were identified with a particular institution.

The following questions guided the interview: (1) Tell me a little bit about yourself. (2) How long have you been graduate dean at this institution? (3) Have you been graduate dean elsewhere? (4) What is your academic background? (5) Would you be able to tell me approximately how many students you have mentored over the years? (6) What has been your biggest success as graduate dean? (7) What has been most discouraging for you as graduate dean? (8) What experience do you have with centralized and decentralized graduate education models? (9) Describe a typical day or week. (10) What meetings do you regularly attend? (11) Do you reserve time for your

own research or your own projects? (12) What types of questions do faculty bring to you for information or assistance? (13) What types of questions do students bring to you for information or assistance? (14) What personal benchmarks do you have for yourself in your position? (15) If I asked the provost about you, what would he/she say? (16) Within the past week, what problem(s) arose and how did you solve it? (17) How do you know you are doing a good job? (18) Are there issues in graduate education that you feel you influence? (19) What are the pressing issues in your office right now? (20) If you had a wish about graduate education what would it be?

Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Permission was obtained to record the interviews to ensure accuracy and brief notes were taken during the interview in case the audiotape failed. One dean asked to have the transcript sent to him so that he could read it for accuracy. The transcription of the interview was sent to the dean and returned to me with comments. None of the other deans were sent transcripts of the interviews.

Lastly, each dean was also asked to respond to a case study (see Figure 1). The case study asked the deans to think about how they would handle a faculty member's ideas about a new program. It was thought that the responses to the case study would help validate responses to the interview and provide some triangulation of responses. Written responses via e-mail were provided by five of the ten deans. Three responses were given as part of the interview. Two deans did not respond to an e-mail query asking them to provide brief comments about the case study.

A new faculty member in Biology is excited about an idea she has for a new program. She has been at the University since August 2003 and has spoken to several other members of the faculty about her ideas. She is enthusiastic so she makes an appointment with the graduate dean to discuss the possibility of a new program. Prior to the meeting, she sends a brief synopsis of the program idea to the dean.

Grad Dean: How is it going for you? How did your first semester go?

Faculty Member: Great, great. I'm already starting to feel like I belong here. I've spent the first six months establishing my lab and I taught two undergraduate courses last semester. I've met some faculty. In fact, it was in these conversations with faculty that I came up with the ideas for this new program.

Grad Dean: Yes, I read through your proposal.

Faculty: This program could involve members of Biology, Chemistry, Engineering, Geology, and even Communications! Take a look at the courses already on campus that could be brought in under this program. The potential is so great. Everyone I've talked to has met my ideas with enthusiasm.

Grad Dean: Have you thought about how one balances faculty responsibilities within a department with an interdisciplinary program like this?

Faculty: This is so cutting edge, I can't imagine any faculty member not wanting to be involved.

Grad Dean: We actually had some preliminary plans to offer something like this in another department. I'll take a close look at your proposal and compare the two plans. Yours might fit in and enhance what we've already drafted. Say, thanks for coming in. I'm glad to hear that you're settling in. I'll be in touch.

As graduate dean what additional questions would you ask the faculty member? Where would you go from here? Whom would you talk to?

Figure 1. Case Study.

Verification

Following the "zigzag" process, it became apparent that follow-up questions were needed to clarify certain answers. In the process of transcribing an interview, a question that occurred would be taken down and later asked of the interviewee. For example, in the course of one of the interviews, a dean had said that people perceived him as someone with power since he acted on petitions. I followed up with an e-mail asking specific questions about the petition approval process. I asked him if the majority of the petitions

were approved and how many were not approved? The response from the dean was a clarification defining what power meant. He wrote the following:

> I perceive power as the ability to institute change. Thus, ruling on individual student petitions, while essential to orderly and fair process (and to academic standards) does not, to me signify the power of, let us say, the Dean of a College of Arts and Sciences. Since the Graduate Dean has no faculty he has little efficacy to affect the direction of the institution. He can act as only a monitor and protector of institutional standards.

The statement, "he can act as only a monitor and protector of institutional standards" became important later on in the analysis of the data. As a result of this follow-up response, I also learned more about how petitions were processed at his university. During analysis of the data as well, if a question arose, the researcher e-mailed the dean to clarify their answer. I e-mailed all of the deans, restating their answer to the question, "Are there issues in graduate education that you feel you influence?" Then, the deans were asked if there were other issues they influenced. While some of the deans verified that what they said was accurate, others added to their answers providing more specific examples of issues they had influenced on their campuses. Responses to e-mail requests became part of the data and were analyzed along with the interviews and responses to case studies.

As the data were coded and themes were formed, the researcher sent out e-mails to the deans participating in the study querying participants further and asking them to verify whether they had any additional experiences related to the findings. For example, as the four themes were developed with regard to petitions, I queried the deans to see if

they had any experiences in which petitions had led to a change in policy. Also included in the e-mail was a brief summary of my findings about petitions. This allowed an opportunity for the deans to agree or disagree with the theories that I was proposing. Not all of the deans responded to my follow-up e-mail queries. On average, three deans would respond each time that I went back for clarification. I incorporated their follow-up responses into the data.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word documents by the researcher to help remember the conversations and to find areas in the interview that needed to be clarified. Once transcribed, the researcher reviewed the interviews again making sure that the transcriptions were accurate. This became another opportunity to flag areas where additional questions could be asked. Files were then electronically imported into the software program The Ethnograph v.5.08 (2001) to code and analyze the data. Each interview was treated as a separate file but grouped under a project in Ethnograph. Initially, files were reformatted using the numbering feature, which allowed each line of text to be numbered. After the files were reformatted using the numbering feature and were saved, the transcripts were read several times and notes were made to describe the statements. Next, the transcriptions were coded using The Ethnograph v.5.08 (2001) quick code feature. John V. Seidel, creator of The Ethnograph software, explains qualitative data analysis as a process of "noticing, collecting and thinking about interesting things" (1998, p. 73). According to Seidel, there are two levels of noticing:

> On a general level, noticing means making observations, writing field notes, tape recording the interviews, gathering documents, etc. When you do this you are

> producing a record of the things that you have noticed. Once you have produced a record, you focus your attention on that record, and notice interesting things in the record. ...As you notice things in the record you name, or 'code,' them (Seidel, 1998, p. 73).

Code Words

As the interviews were transcribed, common code words among the deans emerged. The process of transcribing and coding facilitates the collecting and thinking processes. As the interviews were read, short phrases or descriptive words to summarize the meaning of what the deans were expressing were used as the codes. Three types of coding procedures are used in grounded theory including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, 1998). In open coding, initial categories of information or concepts about the phenomenon being studied are identified (Creswell, 1998; Strauss& Corbin, 1998). Axial coding allows the researcher to assemble the data in new ways. In axial coding the initial categories identified in open coding are related to subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open and axial coding are not necessarily sequential analytic steps (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) define selective coding as "the process of integrating and refining the theory" (p. 143).

After all files were transcribed and coded, a list of code words was generated by count. The Ethnograph v. 5.08 software has a feature that totals the number of times a code word has been used. Table 1 shows the code word as it was used in The Ethnograph v. 5.08, a brief explanation of the code word, and the number of times it appeared in all of the interviews. Only the words that appeared more than five times in the course of the interviews are shown in the table.

Table 2. Code Words by Count.

Code Word	Explanation of Code Word	Count
STANDARDS	Standards	75
WKNGFAC	Working with Faculty	45
ADMISSIONS	Admissions	37
WKNGSTUD	Working with Students	35
POLICIES	Policies	30
WKNGPROV	Working with Provost	29
PROGRAMDEV	Program Development	28
DECENTRAL	Decentralized	24
GCOUNCIL	Graduate Council	23
PETITIONS	Petitions	23
MEETINGS	Meetings	22
CENTRALIZE	Centralize	17
WKNGPRES	Working with President	15
TELEPHONE	Telephone	14
BUDGET	Budget	14
RESEARCH	Research	14
E-MAIL	E-Mail	12
OFFICEMNGT	Office Management	12
CULTURE	Culture	11
CDEANS	College Deans	11
GRADDIRECT	Graduate Directors	11
THESES&DIS	Theses and Dissertations	10
GRADFACULT	Graduate Faculty	9
STIPENDS	Stipends	9
DEPTDECIDE	Department decides	9
MINIMUMREQ	Minimum requirements	9
TATRAINING	Graduate Teacher Assistant Training	8
ELECTRONIC	Electronic	8
PROGRAMREV	Program Review	8
COMPARISON	Comparisons with other institutions	8
ASSESSMENT	Assessment	8
PROBLEMS	Student Problems	8
INTERDISCIPLINARY	Interdisciplinary programs	8
PEERS	Peer institutions	7
TWAIVERS	Tuition waivers	7
MINORITY	Minority	7
FELLOWSHIP	Fellowships for students	7
STRATPLAN	Strategic Plan	7
9/11 Issues	Post 9/11 issues	6
STUDENT	Student	6
GOVERNANCE	Formal governance bodies	6
FUNDING	Funding	6
FACULTY	Faculty	6
POWER	Power	6

Making Sense of the Code Words

The researcher developed core themes based on the amount of data collected on an idea or theme. The themes reflected the recurrent or underlying patterns of activities in the role of the graduate dean. The researcher assigned a higher priority to a significant idea of the deans that came up more often in the interviews. This was determined by the number of times something was mentioned. On Table 1, note that "standards" and "working with faculty" was discussed most by the deans. Consideration was also given to how a selected theme related to other themes. According to Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995), it is up to the researcher to make the data meaningful, to create "what is there by constantly thinking about the import of previously recorded events and meanings" (p. 168). Strauss and Corbin (1998) stress that while the interview text "provides clues about how categories relate, the actual linking takes place not descriptively but rather at a conceptual level" (p. 125). Figures two, three, and four show how the researcher developed themes and assertions from the axial coding process. A discussion of each category, theme, and assertion form the basis of Chapter IV.

In using the axial coding process, the data were reassembled in new ways. It was in reassembling the data that a grounded theory developed and a central phenomenon was established. In order to get from the brief code words listed in Table 1 to more meaningful codes, I re-read through the data line by line identifying significant ideas. For example, I looked at all textual lines that I had coded "petitions" to identify words or "codes" that deans talked about with regards to that subject. Reading the data many times was essential.

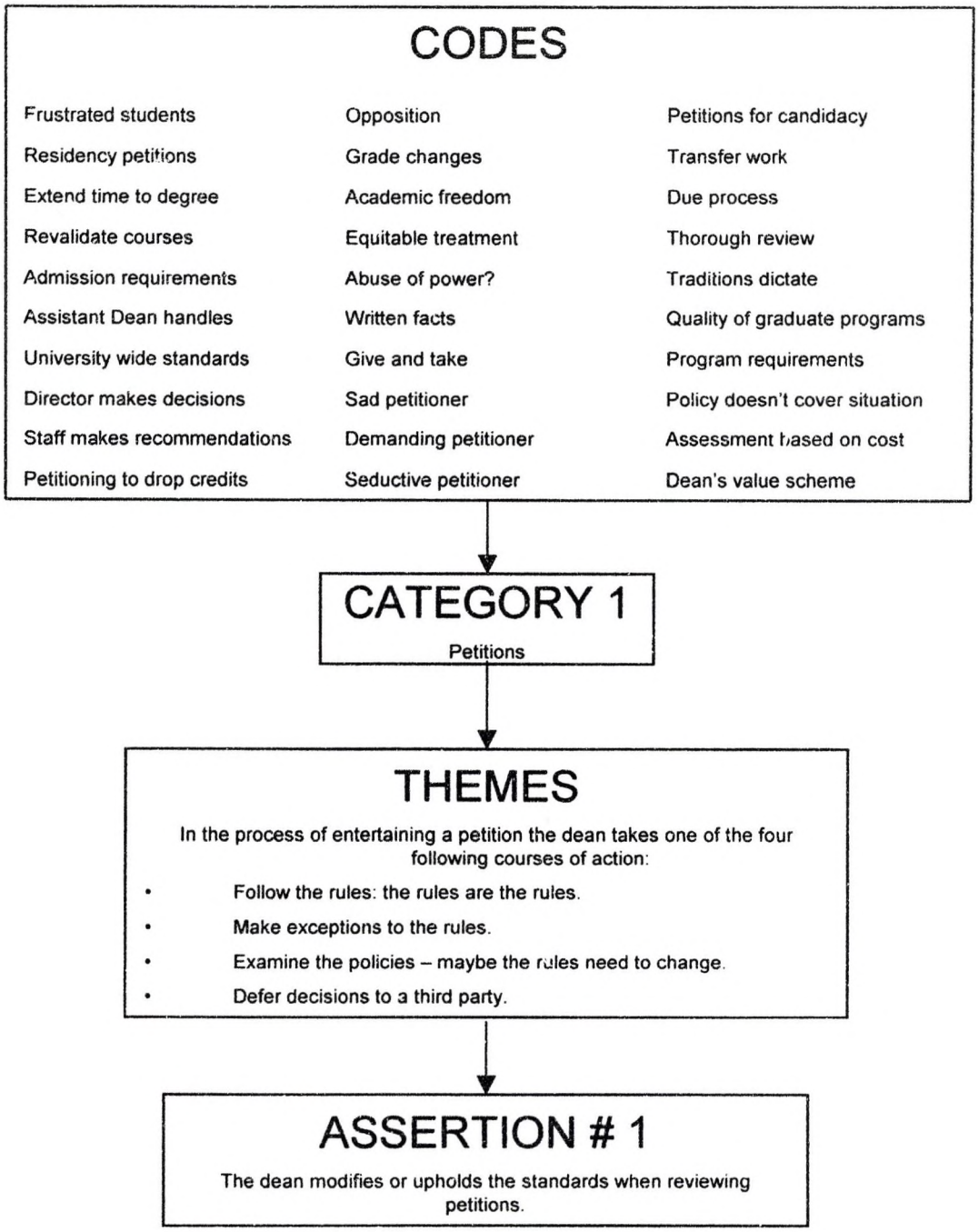


Figure 2. Model Showing the Development of the Themes and Assertion Around the Category of Petitions.

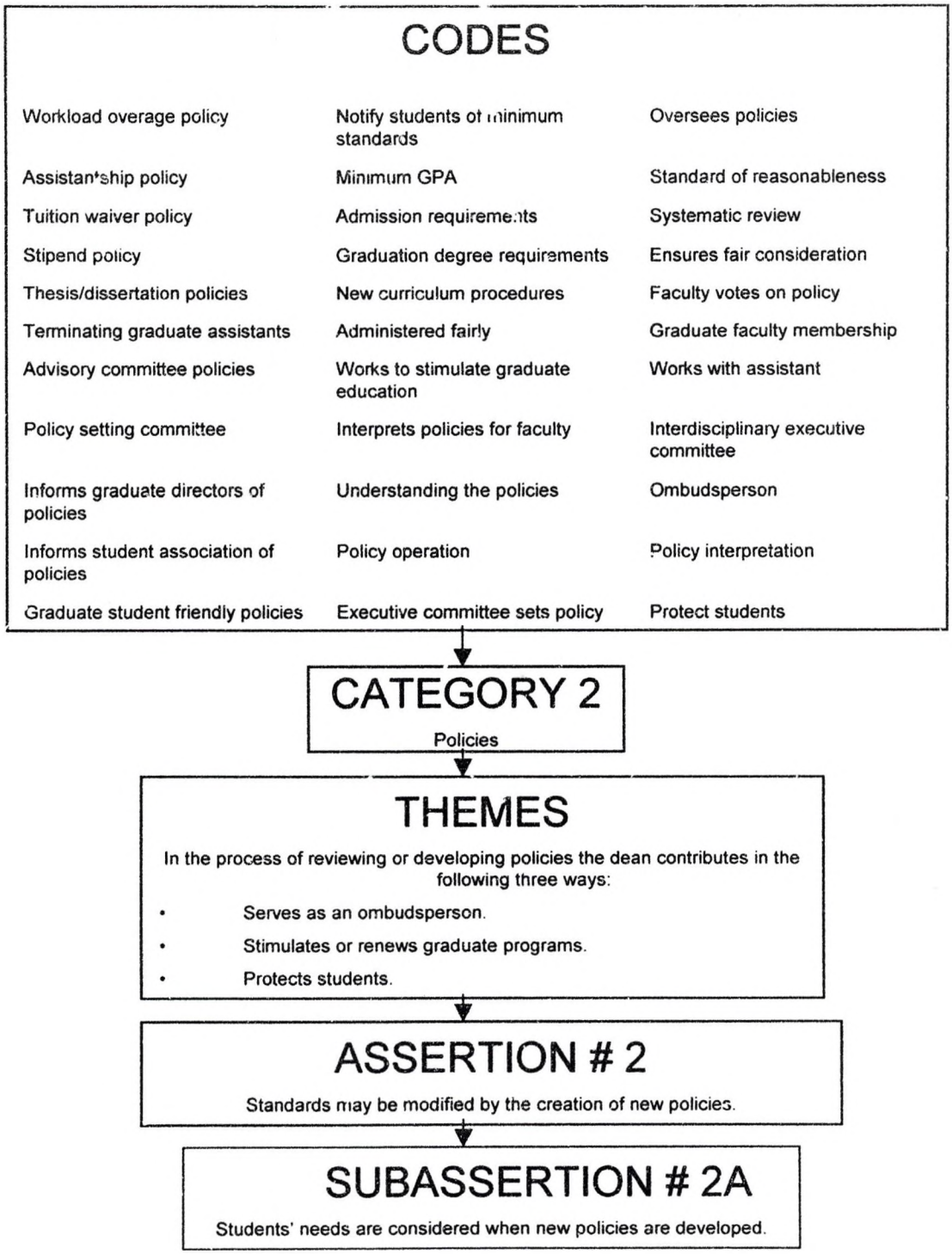


Figure 3. Model Showing the Development of the Themes and Assertion around the Category of Policies.

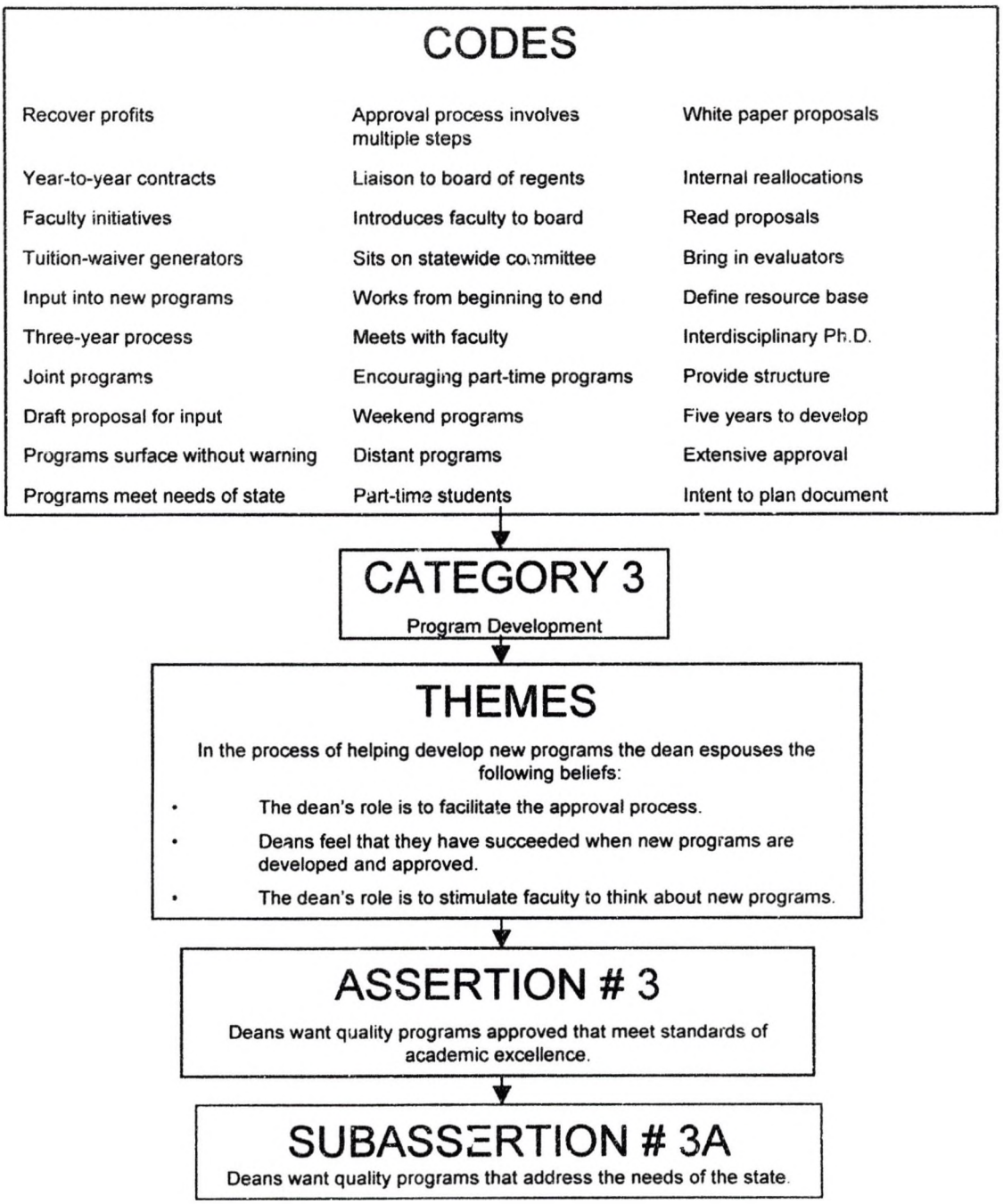


Figure 4. Model Showing the Development of the Themes and Assertion around the Category of Program Development.

It became important to identify the causal conditions and the intervening conditions that influenced the phenomenon. Strauss and Corbin (1998) define causal conditions as those sets of events or happenings that influence the phenomenon and intervening conditions as those that alter the impact of causal conditions on the phenomenon. Developing a diagram of the theory helped me to clarify how each of the categories related to one another. The development of the theory also forced me to go back to the data and look at it in new ways. Figure 5 is a diagram of the theoretical model describing the role of the graduate dean as "guardian of standards and academic excellence" in the context of the review of rules and regulations and review of policies. The causal conditions including petitions, review of existing policies and/or the development of new policies, and program development proposals influence the phenomenon, the dean. Intervening conditions include administrators, faculty, students, staff, formal governance, traditions, economic development initiatives, accreditation standards, national trends, and world events. The dean undertakes strategies to handle the causal conditions and as a result standards are modified or upheld

Additional Search Features

Another feature of The Ethnograph v.5. 08 that was used was to find a text word. This is available on the menu when one selects, "code a data file." First, one brings up a file and then selects "find." One can find a text word or a code word. Very often in the course of analyzing the data, questions would arise whether a term or idea had been said but was left out of the coding. Searching for terms allowed verification that an idea was discussed but not coded or that the idea was not discussed. For example, in looking at the ways deans work with presidents, doing a term search on the word "president" allowed

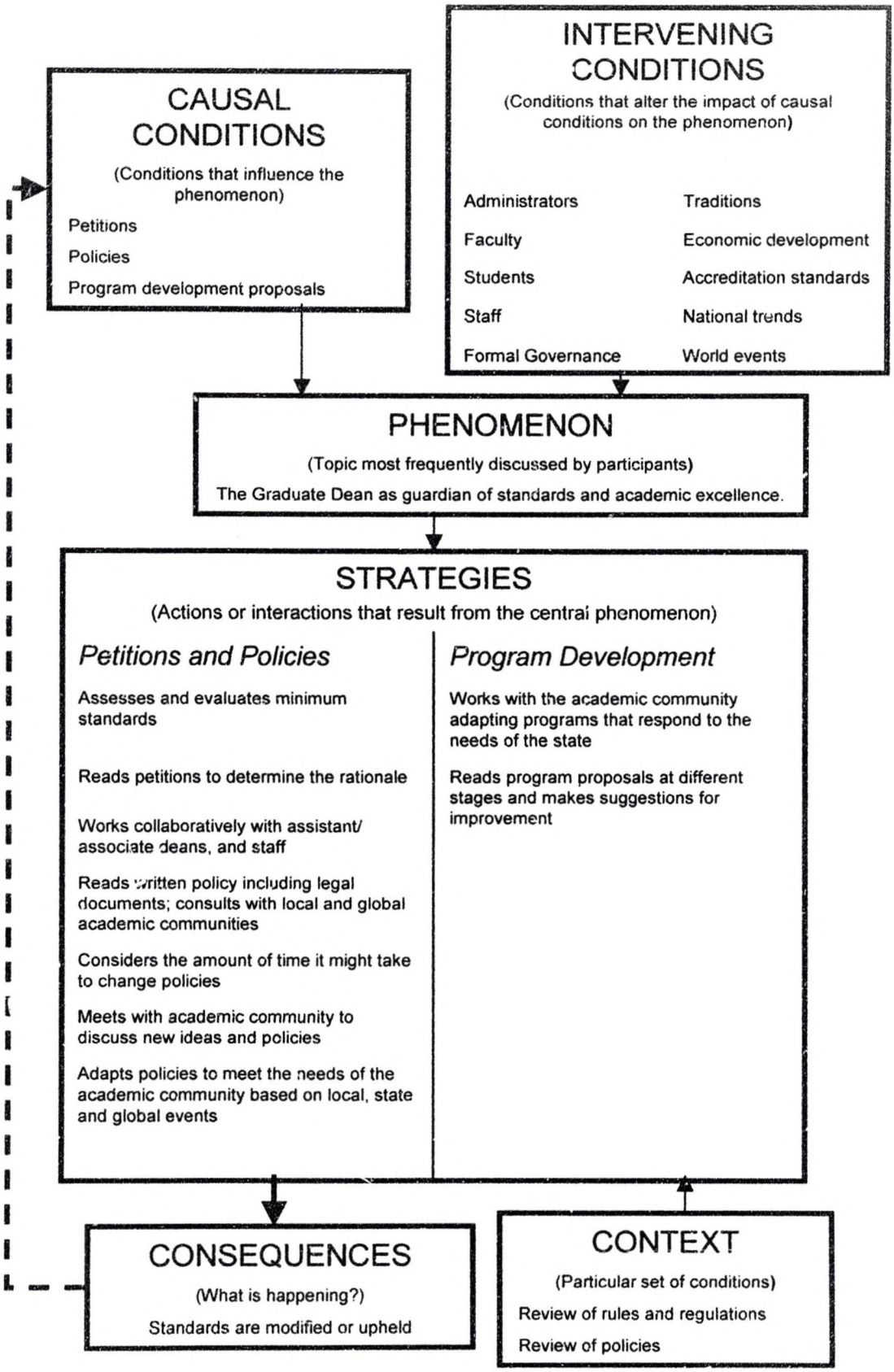


Figure 5. Theoretical Model (with definitions) Describing the Role of the Graduate Dean in Modifying and Upholding Standards.

me to look at the context of the word usage. This information assisted in an understanding of how deans work with presidents. It was a way to verify the coding that had been done.

Case Study

The case study responses that were received were input into The Ethnograph v.5.08 along with the transcribed interviews and were analyzed. Each response was coded and categories were identified. However, sometimes I discussed the case study with the deans and recorded the conversation to later transcribe. Only five deans provided a written response to the case study and one of these five referred the researcher to their website where information was given about the process on new program development. The original intent of the case study was to validate the data extracted from the interviews. I believed that if the deans were to write out a response it would be a way of validating the data; however, it felt awkward following up with a request for the deans to provide a written response so I did not was pursue them.

Analysis of Responses

The researcher's questions were an attempt to elicit answers to the question guiding the research. To understand the role of the graduate dean the researcher examined the ways that the graduate dean interacts with faculty, students, staff and other administrators. Interview questions asked the deans to tell what types of questions faculty and students bring to them. Answers to these questions helped describe the role of the dean. Asking the deans to describe a recent problem that a student brought to them helped to understand their role. Hearing the deans' responses to what they felt they had

been most successful provided valuable insights into what they viewed their role to be in shaping graduate education.

Insights into the role of the graduate dean were extrapolated from the answers to the interview questions and the case study. Results from the coding and themes of the interviews with the graduate deans will be reported by the frequency of appearance of the theme, relationships among themes, or themes with conceptual importance. Decisions about how best to present information evolved from the analysis of the information, the interviews, the responses to the case study, and finally to the development of a theoretical model.

Results of the study will be presented in Chapter IV and will include a description of the ten coded interviews and responses to a case study. First, the categories and themes will be discussed, and next the data are presented in an axial coding paradigm. In axial coding, the researcher assembles the data in new ways after open coding. The central phenomenon is identified within the context of the study. In addition, the causal conditions, intervening conditions, the strategies, and consequences are discussed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Selected Processes at the Institutions in the Sample

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of the graduate dean. Prior to interviewing the deans I tried to determine the function of the graduate school or graduate office at each of the institutions in the study. To help understand the function of the graduate school, a determination was made as to the entities responsible for graduate school processes. For example, in the application process does the prospective graduate student mail the application to the graduate school or to the department? The answer to that question signifies how centralized or decentralized a graduate school is in its structure. If the graduate school is involved in all of the graduate school processes then most likely it is a centralized graduate school. For example, if the graduate school has the final say on admittance, granting an assistantship, and approving students for graduation, then the graduate school is more centralized. If it is the department or program that has the decision-making power to admit, grant an assistantship, and confer the degree, then it is viewed as a decentralized graduate process. Table 3 shows the entities responsible for various graduate processes in the ten institutions studied.

One of the questions asked of the graduate deans in their interview was their experience with centralized and decentralized graduate education. In an early e-mail to deans (See Appendix B) whom I thought might attend a regional meeting, I identified the purpose of the dissertation to be that of understanding the role of the

graduatedean/director and to see if and how the role changes in a centralized or decentralized graduate school. Prior to finalizing the topic proposal I had considered this topic. For this reason, the deans who had received that e-mail message (Appendix B), initiated the topic of centralization or decentralization, before I ever asked the question. For example, in one interview I asked the dean to reflect on his successes as graduate dean. Here is the response:

> To get at the crux of your dissertation. We have a model, a highly decentralized model of graduate education. It was set up 15 or so years ago in which the academic units, schools, colleges, and departments, have pretty much autonomy over their programs. And the role of the graduate school is just an oversight organization to set policies and procedures that apply to all graduate programs.

In another interview we were talking about the difficulty of getting faculty to vote on constitutional changes, and so the dean was asked, "What do you attribute the lack of voting to?" Below is the response:

> Here I would attribute it to the fact that the entire graduate program is entirely decentralized. You have a question later (about our experiences with centralized and decentralized graduate education). And I would dare say it's fiercely decentralized.

Because of the deans' interest in centralization and decentralization, an examination of the entities responsible for graduate school processes (See Table 3) became important to understanding the role the graduate school played at the institutions in the study.

A study by Lynch and Bowker (1984) surveyed graduate deans to determine whether administrative control was located in the graduate school, department, or with

the college dean for various functions including admissions, reviewing academic progress, fellowships, other financial aid, appointing qualifying thesis and dissertation committees, certifying graduation, and overseeing student services. Lynch and Bowker (1984) referred to the 1981 CGS publication entitled *The Organization and Administration of Graduate Schools in the U.S.* in which the degree of centralized administration and organization was noted as a major difference among graduate schools (p. 13). The definition of decentralization that CGS used, according to Lynch and Bowker (1984), was the following: "A decentralized system is one in which 'authority and administrative controls are assigned to the deans of the various schools and colleges' (rather than the graduate dean)" (p. 13).

If one uses this definition, one can see from Table 3 that the institutions in the study have a mixture of centralized and decentralized processes. For example, at Ohio University, students mail their applications for graduate school to the graduate school or the department to which they are applying. The graduate school awards acceptance, but the department awards the assistantship. The department also has final say on petitions, approves graduation, and theses and dissertations. The department, except in the case of the interdisciplinary Ph.D. program, approves the students final program of study, followed by the student's advisory committee, college dean, and program director. The college dean may dismiss students at Ohio University. The graduate school is responsible for establishing minimum standards. Ohio University is a good example of an institution with a mixture of primarily decentralized processes, since the graduate school is just one of the units involved. If most of the functions are handled in the graduate school office, then the school is considered centralized. UND, UNR, and USC

have the majority of their processes being handled by the graduate school; and for this study, I deemed these schools centralized. If the departments, programs, or colleges handled many of the functions, then, for purposes of this study I deemed these schools decentralized. There did not seem to be a relationship between the size of the graduate school and centralization however, further study could be done.

Table 3. Entities Responsible for Graduate School Processes at Ten Institutions.

Processes	OU	SIU-C	SUNY	UL	UM-KC	UND	UN-R	USC	WSU	WVU
Application:	GS,D	D	[illegible]	A	A[3]	GS	GS	GS	GS	A
Admission:	GS	D[1]	D	GS	A[3]	GS	GS	GS	GS	P
Assistantships:	D	D	D	D	C[3]	C	D[3]	D	D	D
Minimum standards:	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS
Petitions:	D	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS, GC	GS	P, CD
Approval to graduate:	D	GS	GS	GS	C[3]	GS	GS	GS	D	P
Approval of theses:	D	D, AC	D, AC[2]	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	D	AC
Approval of dissertations:	D	D, AC	D, AC[2]	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	AC
Approval of program of study:	D[4]	D	D	D, AC	D[3]	GS	GS	GS	D	AC
Dismissal:	CD	GS	D	GS	C[3]	GS	GS	GS	GS	CD

Key to Table 3:
A = Office of Admissions; C = College; D = College Dean; AC = Student's Advisory Committee; D = Department; GC = Graduate Committee; GS = Graduate School; P = Program;
[1]Serves as final check; [2]Requires outside reader; [3]Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program

What became important to this study is not who or where decisions were made, but rather that all of the deans in the study addressed minimum standards in the decision-making process. As I reexamined the processes I looked for similarities and differences. On the fourth line of Table 3, it shows that the graduate schools in this study, or in essence the graduate deans, were concerned about minimum standards. In other words, all of the deans were involved in setting minimum standards for graduate education at their institutions regardless of whether they were decentralized or centralized. This finding was critical and helped shape the direction of the theory. Table 3 shows that

there is no other process that graduate deans do consistently. Based on this, the graduate dean as guardian of standards and academic excellence emerged.

The Grounded Theory

The researcher wanted to discover what the role of the dean was in graduate education. In analyzing the data, three issues that deans talked about frequently were petitions, policies, and program development. These became the three major categories.

After the categories and themes are discussed, the assertions formed from the data are presented. Next, the central phenomenon is identified within the context of the study and the causal conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences are discussed.

Petitions

The first category, "petition," refers to a formally drawn request often bearing the name(s) of a person(s) making the request, that is addressed to a person or group of persons in authority or power. Eight of the ten deans had final authority on graduate school petitions. Petitions are used for determining exceptions to rules. Petitions include requests from students, very often signed off by faculty and college deans, to the graduate dean for exceptions to graduate school policies and standards. Petitions from faculty in the form of memos regarding exceptions to any number of graduate school policies and standards are also common. What is required of students when petitioning varied from institutions in this sample, as does the way petitions are handled. When a petition comes in from a student, a graduate dean must consider established written policy regarding the request. As Dean Nine stated, "Sometimes half the battle about making decisions is just figuring out what the policies actually happen to be." What are future ramifications, if

any, if the petition is granted? What are the legal requirements regarding the petition? Are there similar requests that have come in and how have they been handled? There is constant interplay among these various conditions.

Students petition for a number of reasons. These mentioned most often by the deans included: waiving an admissions requirement, requesting grade changes, asking to take more or less credits than required when on an assistantship, asking to go on leave, withdrawing late from a course, seeking acceptance of transfer credits, petitioning for candidacy, asking permission to work at a job in addition to their assistantship, extending the time to degree, and extending assistantship funding at institutions where there is a limit (i.e., master's students are only given assistantships for two years, Ph.D. students for five years). Graduate schools commonly have established minimum admission standards, including a minimum grade point average and the requirement for international students to take the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Some institutions use GRE scores, but it is not something that is uniformly established. There is some uniformity about grade point average requirements with regard to graduation. However, in this study at least one institution allowed students to calculate their grade point averages based on their programs of study. Thus, if a student received a failing grade in a course, the student could remove it from the program of study and replace it with another course. The overall grade point average required to graduate was not uniform in the institutions studied. However, some of the institutions in the study required a 3.00 grade point average to graduate.

In the process of entertaining a petition, the dean takes one of the following four courses of action:

1. Follow the rules—the rules are the rules and no exceptions will be granted.
2. Make exceptions to the rules.
3. Examine the policies—Maybe the rules need to be changed.
4. Defer decisions to a third party.

Responding to petitions is not a cut-and-dried, black-and -white process, so the deans might espouse all of these actions depending on the circumstances. These actions are considered themes in this study. Deans consistently espouse high standards of academic excellence while at the same time they recognize that life events sometimes interfere with a student's academic work. While each action/theme is discussed as though it is separate, they cannot be considered in isolation. In addition, the categories of petitions and policies are closely connected. Figure 2 is a model showing the development of the themes and assertion around the category of petitions. Figure 2 shows the code words that led to the category of petitions, the themes or courses of action that the dean took after reviewing petitions, and the assertion that the dean modifies or uphold the standards of an institution when reviewing petitions.

Theme One: Follow the Rules—the Rules Are the Rules

Dean One had been confronted the day of the interview with a graduate program that was asking to allow one of their students to graduate with a 2.96 instead of a 3.0. Dean One talked about getting together with an associate dean at the CGS meeting and asking him/her to walk around the block while discussing this matter. It was not a decision that he made lightly. He considered the 50 or more other students who also have a grade point average close to 3.00 and whether waiving the requirement to graduate with a 3.00 was fair to all of the students who met the 3.00 requirement. Another point that

was made was that the faculty set the 3.00 standard, so it should be followed. Dean One stated:

> The faculty have said a 3.00 is the minimum standard...When your faculty have said, 'this student is not a 3.00 student' to then say to me, 'waive the faculty-set standard and allow the student to graduate.' ... I have 50 students, or a little over 50 between a 2.96 and a 3.00 so if I let this one student graduate in that one unit, I've got 50 more...The only one that I've been hard on, that I'm not willing to approve is the graduation rule...If the student has not met the qualifications established by the faculty, as a dean I've been unwilling to override those. That to me has been just inviolate.

Notice that the dean said, "the only one that I'm not willing to approve is the graduation rule." This statement in itself implies that this dean has made exceptions to some standards. So, while the graduation standard of the 3.00 GPA is one that has not been altered, this dean has waived other standards. How can deans not make exceptions? Consider students who have lost a close family member to death. A life- changing event may impact their ability to perform or complete courses.

Maintaining standards is the goal of graduate deans, despite the many telephone calls and e-mails from faculty to determine the dean's support for a particular exception. Deans are not out there making friends when petitions have been denied. Dean One said,

> That doesn't make friends for a graduate dean when you say, 'no' and a lot of what my job is, is saying, 'no, here's a policy, here's something the faculty have set and I am not going to violate that.'

Faculty members continually influence deans in their decision-making process and they are a major intervening factor when it comes to maintaining and upholding standards. One dean commented on the importance of the graduate school providing "uniform enforcement of all published standards and known practices, whether promoted by the Graduate School or the program". In the words of the dean "An unjustified exception will lead to a line of 'me toos' at the door."

Dean Two talked about the tight relationship that is necessary between the graduate dean and the college dean to create the right climate for graduate education. As an example, he talked about how petitions arrive in his office approved by other members of the academic community.

> I think if the political environment will support it over time there is the possibility of creating a much more responsible graduate environment in which the faculty, the department chair, and the dean are all active participants. Right now, petitions, that are absolutely nonsensical and don't fit any of the regulations arrive at my desk approved by the faculty member, by the chair, and by the dean and then it comes up here and upon occasion I'll inquire, 'What did you have in mind in approving that?' and they'll say, 'Well, we knew you'd kick it back.' So we are trying to activate the spirit that's in our bylaws that says the responsibility for the quality of the graduate education program rests with the graduate dean and the dean of the effected unit.

Should deans see students who are forwarding a petition? Dean Two had this view:

> When you sit down with students you are dealing primarily with their wishes, especially the ones who are most demanding on seeing you. You're dealing with a well seasoned repertoire of ways of going through life and getting what you want either by the sad petitioner, the demanding individual, or you'll pardon me as a female, the seductive individual. [The student] comes in and wants to plead their case, whatever has been the mode that works for them in life. My viewpoint is that I don't need the histrionics. Those shouldn't affect my judgment. I certainly don't need some kind of interaction between the other person and myself that's going to affect my judgment and I don't need them flying around the office screaming at everybody. So I don't visit with the students directly at either level.

Dean One talked about occasionally making exceptions, since the graduate school established minimum standards that varied across different disciplines. This dean described the monitoring process that is done by the graduate school at the institution:

> I'm going to monitor and if you are violating the graduate school's minimum I'm going to tell your dean who controls your funding and your faculty review committee that you are not upholding the standards of the institution and we'll see what kind of reaction we get there. I also hold out a potential stick: either I can remove fellowship support or other things in the future. I've not had to invoke penalties there.

So, while this statement could fit under theme two, "make exceptions to the rules," it is clear the dean is also closely monitoring programs according to the rules by reporting them to their college dean and threatening removal of fellowship support.

Theme Two: Make Exceptions to the Rules

The process of allowing students and/or faculty to petition for a change in requirements was described by one dean as a process with a "fair amount of give and take." I shared this statement with all of the deans in a follow-up e-mail. At the same time, I also shared that I was finding that some deans in some cases do not make exceptions. Dean Two had this response:

> Nonsense. Perhaps some rules with very limited parameters can be mechanically applied. However, if a student petitions because his mother died and he had to move and become the principal caretaker for his siblings, are you really going to say, 'Sorry, you have exceeded time to degree limits and are now discharged from your program?' Our students encounter life and it affects their ability to pursue their academic work. We are very strict. For example, if you claim death in the family, you have to come up with formal documentation, often including a death certificate to support a petition for an extension or for permission to withdraw from a class.

While deans discussed conditions that they would not make any exceptions they also admitted to violating rules "all of the time" since students come with "legitimate, compassionate reasons." Dean Four described a situation in which a Ph.D. student had reached the time limit for all coursework. The dean described meeting with the student, who was working full time. His advisor had written to the Graduate School asking for an acceptable timeline and a response had been given with a time-line. The student did not realize that the Graduate School had responded. In the end, the dean assembled a

meeting to discuss what the student could do and develop a plan of action. Here is the description from Dean Four about this case:

> He has one more semester in which I will go back and extend the time limit on some of his courses. But he is obligated to take a certain number of courses in the fall for currency of information so he'll be taking some additional coursework.

Dean Nine talked about individual disciplines petitioning for adjustments to university-wide standards in this statement:

> We have a university wide set of standards and individual disciplines can petition for adjustments to those standards.... [There is one department that] always wants to have support limits that go out at least several decades. That's not quite fair. They want long support limits compared to most disciplines. The standard five years or six semesters would be a reasonable rule of thumb for doctoral students for example. You could still get an extension to that, that's a typical rule of thumb.

Dean Two pointed out the exceptions made for students who are called up for active duty. As he said, "I doubt there would be any tolerance on the campus or in the political sector for failing to accommodate students called into active status." Deans respond to student requests for exceptions. While the deans described the need for documentation- a death certificate in the case of a death, or a letter from a physician in the case of a medical emergency- there was an element of reasonableness that entered into the conversation regarding life events that have an impact upon students' abilities to succeed.

Theme Three: Examine the Policies—Maybe the Rules Need to Change

Deans discussed the need to re-examine current policies due to the number of petitions that came in asking for exceptions to these policies. Dean Ten felt that "petitions should force reexamination of issues, particularly if they come through frequently enough." Dean Two stated that, "When students fail to meet a policy over and over again, you must at least consider the policy and, if it is flawed, change it."

At one institution the dean in a follow-up e-mail described a situation in which policy was affected because of the petitions that had been received. Undergraduates were registering for graduate courses, graduating with a bachelor's degree and then petitioning to use the course in a graduate program. While there was a petition in place that allowed undergraduates during their senior year who had a GPA of at least 3.00 to petition for graduate credit for graduate courses, many students did not know about the existence of this petition. So, after having countless graduate students petition to use these graduate-level courses in their graduate programs, and having these requests denied because there was no way to guarantee that the student had done graduate work, a policy and procedure was developed that prohibited students from enrolling in graduate courses without obtaining written permission to sign up for graduate credit. Students declare up front how they will use the credit and are told what they need to do to obtain graduate credit as an undergraduate. Behind this policy, I believe, is the pursuit for higher standards. Undergraduate students may not be qualified to pursue graduate course work so, by requiring the Graduate School to explicitly grant permission, entrance to graduate courses is protected. The policy also protects graduate education since accrediting bodies want to see clear delineation of graduate courses vis a vis undergraduate courses.

Dean Ten discussed ways in which petitions have caused a re-thinking of policies and whether the policies should be changed. Dean Ten gave the following example:

> I am now beginning to think more of how to deal with joint programs and a policy statement regarding how students are classified when they pursue dual degrees- for example the M.D./Ph.D. program or the Juris Doctor (J.D.)/Master of Public Administration.

Dean Three cited "at least one policy change due to the volume and complexity of petitions." He described a process in which this institution made a policy change to allow more non-degree credits to transfer to student's programs. At Dean Three's institution half the degree requirements could be non-degree credits (up from 12 quarter hours). It was explained that the change to allow non-degree credits was "primarily to accommodate the College of Education and complexities from teachers initially seeking licensure."

The deans also talked about the importance of working with faculty members and college deans to develop a campus culture that abides by academic regulations. On one campus, a big issue was the change of grade process. The policy allowed for a grade change to occur at any time; however, Dean Two would like to change this to a shorter length of time to match what other institutions are doing.

> I'd be happy if we could get them [faculty] to agree to the one-year or 15-month period, [the dean would like the grade change to occur within this time period] whichever they'd like and everybody understood that was how things were going to work. And we stuck by it and we didn't have any controversy or upset about it. The campus culture toward internalizing the idea that academic regulations have

meaning, function, and purpose in the academic environment would be a great contribution to the institution. It would change the institution. It would change the quality of the graduate programs.

The preceding comment shows that Dean Two may prompt an examination of a policy. Dean Two talked about "academic regulations that have meaning" and he links this with quality graduate programs. In my opinion, these comments show that Dean Three has concerns about quality and academic standards.

Theme Four: Defer Decisions to a Third Party

The use of a third party is used two ways. Sometimes a third party is consulted when the dean is preparing a response to the petition and sometimes after a decision has been rendered. Whether the dean is the last stop for a decision could depend on what the student is petitioning and the governance structure of the university. At Dean Ten's institution, some petitions stop in the Graduate School, while other petitions go on to a senate committee. For example, if a student wishes to petition for a change that would affect the student's transcript or to drop a course after a stated registration deadline, a senate committee looks at these petitions and makes a decision. The dean has to make a recommendation whether to approve or disapprove but ultimately it is the decision of the senate committee.

The primary reason students visit graduate deans is because of a problem they are experiencing. Ultimately they are hoping that the dean can remedy the situation. Dean Ten summarized this sentiment when he said:

By the time they [students] get to my office on many matters, it's either a last ditch resort on 'well can you change this or can you override this?' Because they

> view it as the dean has the authority to override anything. Which a lot of times I explain to them that's not really the case. Frequently committees outside of this [the dean's] office override my decisions.

Dean Ten did not seem bothered by the fact that a committee could override his decisions. Dean Ten laughed as he described situations in which he could be sitting at the table and a decision that he had made was overruled. Perhaps his laughter implied that he was not bothered by a committee overruling his decision, or perhaps it implied that he was glad to have another entity to accept responsibility for a decision.

Written documentation is important when acting on petitions that might cross into legal implications and some deans look to a third party to help with a decision. Dean Two expressed the importance of looking to written documents to help with decisions when he said:

> I spend a lot of time with it because I try and make my decisions on something solid, something substantive. So I look for the bylaws, the regulations, I look for what the courts have been doing. Try to use that before making a decision. That is my natural mode of thinking. Then I have an individual, who literally goes through if we get an 8-page petition from somebody, an outrageous letter, she will go through it line by line by line and might come back with 20 pages of response.

This same dean had the university attorney, a third party, read the Graduate School response prior to sending it out. At Dean Two's institution if the student was dissatisfied with the dean's decision, he or she may appeal to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and since he has both titles he recuses himself "from a reconsideration of my own decision and transmits the appeal to a Senior Vice Provost for Personnel."

Eight of the ten deans have a staff member delegated to overseeing the day-to-day activities of his/her office. Most of the time a member of the dean's staff works through the issues, makes a recommendation to the dean, who then is ultimately responsible for a decision. The title of this day-to-day person varies from assistant and associate dean to executive director and coordinator. For all of these eight deans, the day-to-day person would be the first one to see students, review petitions, and make recommendations to the dean. Dean 2 described the way petitions are handled in the office:

> The petitions come to me for final judgment but they [petitions] also come up with recommendations from the staff. They've been through them. They will sit down with me and say 'Here are the pertinent aspects of this case we think you should be thinking about; here's our judgment on them. What do you think?' In the end, every letter that goes out bears my signature and every time there's a hostile response or a lawsuit, it comes in my name. But the help is significant.

Policies

The second category, "policies" also helps define the deans' role in the study as one of "standards bearer," not only as they make decisions on petitions but also in helping establish and maintain policies. Their role is to oversee policies that help uphold the standards of graduate education. Three themes emerged within the category "policies." Figure 3 is a model showing the development of the themes and assertion around the category of policies. The code words that led to the category of petitions are shown in Figure 3, as well as the ways that graduate deans contribute when reviewing or developing policy. Figure 3 shows the assertion that standards may be modified by the

creation of new policies. The subassertion shown is that students' needs are considered when new policies are developed.

In the process of reviewing or developing policies the dean contributes in the following three ways:

1. Serves as an ombudsperson.
2. Stimulates or renews graduate programs
3. Protects students.

Theme One: Serves as an Ombudsperson

An ombudsperson can be defined as a person who investigates and attempts to resolve complaints and problems. Deans serve in this capacity as they help others understand policies. Several of the deans defined their role in broad sweeping remarks. For example, Dean Four described the role of the graduate dean this way:

> My role is to ensure that the students, to ensure both the procedures and the policies, to ensure that students are admitted fairly, as equitably, as easily as possible and then to look to the future at ways we can stimulate graduate education in general.

When talking to Dean Four, it was obvious that it was important to him to understand the policies and to make sure that they were being applied fairly to students. The role of the graduate school as an oversight organization can be heard in the following responses by Deans Six and Seven: "My job really is to oversee policies that govern graduate education" and "The role of the Graduate School is just an oversight organization to set policies, to set procedures that apply to all graduate programs." Dean Ten said, "I think my role here is to provide guidance on what the standards should be."

Policies are developed institution-wide and in departments. In one telling case, Dean Nine had been brought in by the faculty to help solve a problem with a student. The student had gone to the graduate director of the department and had changed the entire advisory committee. The Dean served as an ombudsperson for the department as he listened to the faculty, read the written policy, and helped to interpret it. Here is Dean Nine's description of this event:

> They were upset about it and hadn't bothered to look at their own policy to figure out that the student was doing what was in the policy. There was nothing that I could do to stop the student from doing that without them changing their own policies. I think the faculty, you know we talked through the issue, and I think the faculty developed a better understanding of what's going on. I think they went away satisfied. They had a course of action. They knew what they needed to do--change their own policy.

Students, as well as faculty members, go to deans to determine policies. Dean Six uses the word "ombudsman" in this exchange:

> When students contact me it's usually about some policy issue, either they need a tuition waiver, or they want permission if they're on a restricted fellowship, they want permission to be able to work a few extra hours to earn money or there may be some difficulties with their department and they want me to intercede. So it's sort of an ombudsman function as well.

The dean would be the one to review the request of the student and weigh the request against the policy. Most likely, according to the findings of this study, the dean

would be making decisions based on whether or not the request would jeopardize standards of good graduate education practice.

Theme Two: Stimulates or Renew Graduate Programs

New policies might be developed as a result of strategic planning documents, or members of the academic community might initiate a new policy about admissions, assistantships, or graduation requirements. Development of policies can take years but they can be a source of pride. Dean Two describes the process for new development of policies:

> There is a graduate school executive committee which has the ability to accept policies on behalf of the faculty with the exception of some policies that would be deemed to be bylaw changes, those require the vote of the faculty which is extremely hard to get.

Dean Eight talked about a two-year process to change the definition of graduate faculty. Assistant professors had been allowed on graduate faculty only if they had a proven graduate teaching record. The new policy allowed members of the faculty to be recommended by their departments for graduate faculty status upon being appointed to a tenure-track position, assuming they had the terminal degree. This policy allowed new faculty members the opportunity to work with graduate students immediately. The dean's rationale was that "people coming fresh out of Ph.D. programs are probably more in touch with the cutting edge in their discipline at that point in their career then they are going to be 25 years later." The intent of this policy change, in my view, was to energize students with knowledgeable graduate faculty as advisors, ultimately improving the standards of graduate education.

One dean emphasized the importance of having only full members of the graduate faculty permitted to guide either masters or doctoral students. If I had taken a survey on whether there should be restrictions on who can direct graduate students, there would likely not have been consensus. Some deans feel strongly that it is important to capture the newest faculty member's knowledge of the discipline, and that they are the ones most able to direct students since they are more in touch with the field than a faculty member who had been around for 25 years. The deans who talked about changes to their constitutions often had opened the membership up to faculty members from varying ranks.

The main criteria established for graduate faculty status at Dean Eight's institution were the holding of a tenure-track position and the terminal degree. An additional, rather controversial, change to the policy for Dean Eight was instituting a periodic review of each member's graduate faculty status. Dean Eight was pleased that the policy eventually was approved by the graduate faculty and in his view standards had been raised since students will have opportunities to work with professors who are on the "cutting edge in their discipline." Additionally, criteria had been developed to help make decisions about renewal of graduate faculty status. Dean Eight talks about this process:

> I had drafted a kind of a template for a department's criteria. Most of them have followed that template. It lays out the logic that the criteria that we are looking for [in] graduate faculty are not the normal three part criteria that we generally use in evaluating faculty: teaching, research and service. It's graduate teaching that we are concerned about not undergraduate, it's research and it's also graduate mentoring. To what extent has this person during the previous period, since the

last review, been actively engaged with mentoring graduate students, supervising theses and dissertations, and has a successful track record at that. To some extent the undergraduate teaching, performance and the service performance are extraneous for the decision of graduate faculty and therefore it would be possible for someone in let's say a post-tenure review situation for the post-tenure review committee to say, 'This person's undergraduate teaching is outstanding, and their service to all sorts of capacities on campus is outstanding. The graduate teaching evaluations aren't very good and the person stopped doing research.' We would potentially like to have units recognize maybe it's not appropriate to reappoint this person for the graduate faculty.... Well I don't see the point in having a person like that on the grad faculty really. So, it wasn't really intended to be punitive but it was intended to regularize a process review where the faculty will collegially within a department set up some standards and expectations for what it means to be on the graduate faculty that are separate and apart from being a member of the department.

While the policy gives the responsibility back to the departments to develop graduate faculty criteria, the dean helped set the standard by establishing a template for departments to follow. The policy in itself implies high standards since active research, effective teaching of graduate students, and mentoring of master's and doctoral students are all taken into account.

Theme Three: Protects Students

Protecting students is a concern of the deans. Dean One is actively involved in national issues regarding post 9/11 activities and Homeland Security and expressed great

concern for student protection so that research results can continue to be published. He said,

> As deans we have to ensure that we protect the students. We need to ensure that we don't allow the students to move into areas of research where they are not going to be able to defend their dissertations, where they are not going to be able to advance their careers. And we at points are going to have to ensure that the students' interests are protected while not endangering national security, and that's a new balancing act for us.

While this statement specifically addressed national security, underneath this is the issue of standards. Dean One was quite distressed as he described an incident that had occurred related to national security. A student was allowed to graduate, but did not undertake a dissertation defense on the results section of his dissertation since it had been declared to be classified research. Here is Dean One's description of this situation:

> The department of Homeland Security looked at the results that the student had generated, all of which were from open sources, none of which were classified and said, 'This thesis is dangerous. The information when assimilated will reveal vulnerabilities. You cannot publish this dissertation. You cannot go forward, you can't have this as a dissertation.' And the student was convinced essentially to strip out the results of the dissertation. The professor said, 'why not?' As a graduate dean I don't know how you allow the dissertation to be stripped that way. I don't see how the student can really defend such a dissertation nor do I understand how the student then is employable if there are no research results to publish.

What is the purpose of a dissertation if no results can be published? Would a student be successful without publishable results? In the above example, what was the purpose of the defense if the results were not discussed? Dean One is advocating for clear national policies that protect students from incidents like the one he described.

Dean Six shows concern for students' protection by sitting on an electronic theses and dissertation committee primarily to "protect students and make sure their interests are foremost in any policy.' Dean Eight talked about how in his first year in office as dean he worked with his policies and procedures committee of the Graduate Council to go through the academic catalog to rephrase a lot of the policies so that they were not quite as specific. Here is what he said:

> I think there was something in there about programs of study needed to be submitted not more than ten days before the end of the semester of which the student intends to graduate, you know. And I just read that 'ten days, the semester before' and what if it comes in nine days before the end of the semester? Some of my people on my staff in the Graduate School would be very strict constructionists and say, 'Well, I'm sorry, you missed the deadline. You're going to have to turn in your program of study and then wait a whole semester and then graduate the semester after that.' That's exactly the kind of thing that has given the Graduate School in the past a bad name for being narrow-minded bureaucrats. And, so I obliterated, or I got the committee on policies and practices to go through and edit out a lot of that stuff. We try to work on a standard of reasonableness.

Program Development

Program Development, the third category, refers to the work that goes into developing new graduate programs, including requests to offer new degrees, new curricula, and centers of excellence. Figure 4 is a model showing the development of the themes and assertion around the category of program development. The code words that led to the category of program development are shown in Figure 4, along with the three beliefs/themes that the dean espouses in the process of helping develop new programs. The assertion shows that deans want quality programs approved that meet standards of academic excellence. In addition, a subassertion was developed showing that deans want quality programs that address the needs of the state.

Development of programs and policies had one main commonality: both take time. Deans spoke of it taking three to seven years for a new program to come to fruition. Some of the delays are caused because of the dean wanting to ensure that the program meets standards. For example, Dean Ten's comment, "I had enough input to where I felt comfortable with what materialized" suggests that the dean had a hand in making sure that this would be a quality program. Other delays are due to state mandates about when new programs can be introduced. In the process of helping develop new programs, the deans espouse the following beliefs:

1. The dean's role is to facilitate the approval process.
2. Deans feel that they have succeeded when new programs are developed and approved.
3. The dean's role is to stimulate faculty to think about new programs.

Theme One: The Dean's Role is to Facilitate the Approval Process

The system of creating new programs is similar on most university campuses. The steps involved might not be as numerous for all of the institutions but very often a new program proposal has to first go through college curriculum committees, graduate councils, university curriculum committees, university senates, and state boards prior to being offered. Dean Six described the various steps involved for a new program to be approved:

> First it comes from the faculty. They put forward what is called an 'intent to plan' document. That follows a specific outline. That's filed with the board of governors directly through our office so we know what's going on and if that's approved then they can begin to plan the degree. That would come from the department. Each college has its own graduate council, and it would be approved there, through the college-wide graduate council which then [goes] to the dean of the college. From the dean, if all those are positive, it then goes to the university graduate council for our evaluation. Then it goes from us to the associate provost and then to the board of governors.

While the process described above sounds like many steps, it is quite common for university systems to have developed multi-faceted approval procedures for new programs. It is no wonder some of these proposals took three to five years, with one dean talking about a seven-year process to get a program approved.

Dean Seven talked about the initial stage of proposal formation. He described his role as one of advisor/consultant. "I helped in the sense that, as I do with these master's degrees or others, as an advisor/consultant [I] help them put together the proposal, to help

get it through the system. Get approval." Dean Seven meets with the faculty, and describes what needs to be in the proposal. Here is his summary of a meeting with faculty:

> So I met with them and advised them about what it would take to put together the program. Both in terms of getting a faculty group to develop the curriculum to putting together the proposal. It would need to be approved.. The rationale [would need to be developed.]. You'd have to identify the need and document the need for this and talk about the number, make estimates about the number of perspective students and where the graduates would go to work. And labor statistics. All of that stuff would have to be a part of the proposal. So I helped guide them through that process.

Dean Seven compared writing new program proposals to putting together a grant proposal. As he said,

> It's not so prescriptive that it's self-evident how to put together a good proposal just from those guidelines. There are some general questions. It helps to have some experience in writing these and reading these to really put together a good proposal. It's kind of a like a grant proposal. You know if you're writing a grant for the federal government. Yeah, there are guidelines but there are things they don't tell you that you need to know if you're going to be successful.

Dear Five works closely with the faculty to get programs through the state board. Dean Five says, "When someone wants to start a new program they contact me and I work with them from beginning to end."

The deans were often charged with the responsibility of presenting the new programs to the state board. As a result, one of Dean Two's responsibilities was to "make sure it looks like it's going to fly based on what we've seen over time." Dean Two stated that faculty were pleased with their ability to bring these programs forward. "It is generally acknowledged that we have relationships with the central office to ease these through or speed them through in some cases. And the faculty are very happy with that service."

Deans serve as facilitators as they move programs through the approval process. Experience with the process was beneficial, as it seemed to increase the likelihood that the programs would be approved.

Theme Two: Deans Feel That They Have Succeeded When New Programs Are Developed and Approved

Conversations about innovative interdisciplinary programs brought out a sense of pride in the deans. When Dean Seven was asked what his greatest success as graduate dean had been, his response related to the development of the interdisciplinary program:

> The biggest success is the development of the interdisciplinary Ph.D. program. Because when I came there it had just been established so the basic structure was there. But it has grown since that time. We have added new disciplines so it's expanded in terms of the range of academic subjects that are covered. It has expanded in terms of the enrollment and we've worked out a lot of the wrinkles and problems that arose that weren't anticipated when the program was conceived. So I would say that's probably the biggest success.

Dean Three talked about getting three new Ph.D. programs approved, at a time when the state was not readily approving new programs, as one of his major successes in addition to building the research component at the University. He shared this success:

> I think my other accomplishment is getting three new Ph.D.'s approved during my tenure, particularly getting one of those approved during the period when we had the doctoral review. The time when the state was not really canceling but requiring subsidies from other doctoral programs, we got ours approved.

Graduate Deans in this study take great pride in their programs and are striving for excellence. Dean Nine explained that the standards for programs that he is proposing require effort from all campus departments. His explanation follows:

> We are trying to raise our standards and shoot for higher targets and success of the campus as a whole. It is what in part I and the chancellor and others assuming leadership are responsible for. This isn't, this success, this reputation isn't based on one department or one group of departments, it's based on the campus as a whole--the average success of the campus as a whole, all across, from arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, engineering and so on. That is the boat rises as with success in all different areas.... we want to provide an environment which recognizes excellence and encourages success across the broad spectrum of disciplines on the campus. At least in my opinion that's the way that you will most likely substantially improve.

Theme Three: The Dean's Role is to Stimulate Faculty to Think about New Programs

The deans in this study work primarily with faculty on developing new programs, creating new policies, discussing graduate education related issues with graduate councils and graduate directors. While faculty members are primarily the ones developing new programs, deans can encourage faculty to think creatively. Dean Seven enjoys "meeting and talking with people about new ideas like new program development, new initiatives."

Dean Five wants to try to encourage faculty to think about offering "part-time programs, weekend programs, evening programs, and programs offered at different locations so that folks don't have to be full-time students to come back to school." He was trying to think of ways to get the Sociology Department to view itself differently. In the area was a prison, and he wanted the department to offer part-time and weekend programs to people working in the criminal justice system. He said that faculty members were reluctant to change their programs to fit these individuals' needs but that his goal was to work with the faculty and encourage them to think of ways to offer students part-time programs.

Dean Nine had developed a new program and gotten campus and state approval for it, without requesting any additional dollars. He had worked on a plan that used new dollars from a tuition increase to hire "an acceptable number of faculty" for the program. He described the campus reaction this way:

> They thought that there was only one way that you could get a new degree program...Well; it's interesting how mindsets are established on a campus. There

were a lot of people that found this very surprising and I thought it was just obvious.

Assertions

As shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4 an assertion was established for each of the three categories: petitions, policies, and program development. All of the assertions relate to the dean's role in guarding and academic standards of excellence. The assertions that were developed are as follows:

- Assertion #1: The dean modifies or upholds the standards when reviewing petitions.
- Assertion #2 Standards may be modified by the creation of new policies.
- Subassertion#2A: Students' needs are considered when new policies are developed.
- Assertion #3: Deans want quality programs that meet standards of academic excellence.
- Subassertion #3A: Deans want quality programs that address the needs of the state.

For the category of petitions, as shown in Figure 2, the dean may choose to follow the rules, make an exception to the rules, examine the policies to see if the rules need to be changed, or defer a decision to a third party. Ultimately, based on these courses of action, the assertion that was established was that the dean decides whether to modify or uphold the standards when reviewing petitions. Modification of standards may occur based on the number and type of petitions.

For the category of policies as shown in Figure 3, when deans reviewed current policies or developed new ones, the issue of standards was present. It is often the role of the dean to interpret the meaning of a policy and to meet with students and faculty to try to explain it. In this way, the dean provides oversight of policies and serves as an ombudsperson. The dean also reviews current policies and instigates new policies. Very often a review of current policies stimulates and renews graduate programs. Modifications to policies may be necessary due to the changing nature of graduate education. Recent national issues related to 9/11 activities have led to changes in admissions and graduation practices for students. Also, with more students enrolling who are non-traditional students, universities are meeting the demand and offering part-time and distance programs. New policies need to be developed to adapt to the changing programs. As new policies are developed or old policies modified, the dean is concerned about protecting students. Figure 3 shows that the assertion was developed that standards may be modified by the creation of new policies. Underneath this assertion was the subassertion that students' needs are considered when new policies are developed.

The third category is program development. As shown in Figure 4, deans espouse the following beliefs with regard to program development. They believed that the deans' role in program development was to facilitate the approval process. Deans felt that they had succeeded when new programs were developed and approved. The deans believed that their role was to stimulate faculty to think about new programs. These themes led to the assertion that deans want quality programs approved that meet standards of academic excellence. Along with this assertion is the subassertion that deans want quality programs that address the needs of the state.

Central Phenomenon

The word "phenomenon" in qualitative research is a term that answers the question "What is going on here?" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 130). Strauss and Corbin (1998) recommend "looking for repeated patterns of happenings, events, or actions/interactions that represent what people do or say, alone or together, in response to the problems and situations in which they find themselves" (p. 130). The graduate dean as "guardian of standards and academic excellence" became the central phenomenon in this study. When the data were examined and the question was asked, "what is going on here?" it became clear that what the deans were doing was helping to establish and/or maintain standards and striving for academic excellence in the development of new policies and programs. Deans work as "standards bearers" in order to maintain high standards across campus. It made no difference in this study whether the deans worked in a more centralized graduate school environment or a decentralized environment, they all were involved in establishing minimum standards for graduate education. These standards help to create a climate of academic excellence on campuses. Standards also help to maintain equity among and within programs. For example, requiring a graduation grade point average of 3.0 for all programs allows for uniformity. What was striking in this study was that all of the graduate deans, whether responding to a petition, reviewing or developing a policy, or working with faculty on new program proposals, were primarily concerned with whether the standards set forth for graduate education were being maintained. They believed it was their role to help achieve academic excellence across all facets of graduate education. The CGS emphasizes the importance of the graduate school's role in "providing a mechanism whereby the faculty of the institutions

define the minimum standards acceptable for post-baccalaureate work and to ensure that both the campus-wide and program-specific standards articulated and approved by the faculty are being observed" (CGS, 1990b, p. 3). In Stewart's (2004) "Welcome from the President" on the CGS website, she observed that: "Our mission is to ensure the vitality of intellectual discovery and to promote an environment that cultivates rigorous scholarship." Note the word "rigorous" as she describes scholarship. The introduction of the word "rigor" refers to the concept of high standards within an environment of academic excellence.

Lynch and Bowker (1984) surveyed 338 institutions and found that in more than a quarter of the institutions surveyed, the graduate school had no control over graduate assistantships. In a third, they did not review academic progress, and in nearly half, they did not appoint qualifying, thesis and dissertation committees. More than a fifth did not control graduate admissions and one in six did not certify students for graduation. This is consistent with the sample group used in this study, where students were accepted into graduate programs by six of the ten graduate schools (see Table 3). Assistantships were not awarded by any of the graduate schools except for two institutions that did award assistantships for their interdisciplinary Ph.D. program. Final approval to graduate was performed by six of the schools with one additional school involved when working with their interdisciplinary Ph.D. students. The graduate school dean was responsible for guarding minimum standards at all ten of the institutions in this study. This is a significant finding to this study. As one of the deans in this study explained, the role of the graduate dean is to "provide some central accountability for the graduate programs...It's setting the tone for what we want the campus to do."

Deans help to establish minimum admission, program and graduation requirements and very often these minimum requirements are not negotiable once they are in place. However, petitions, policies, and program development proposals that come in to the graduate dean are constantly influencing standards.

Causal Conditions

Causal conditions usually represent sets of events or happenings that influence phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 131). In this study, the causal conditions consisted of petitions, the review of existing policies and/or the development of new policies, and program development proposals. These three causal conditions caused the dean to reflect on the standards of graduate education at his or her institution.

Strategies

The actions or interactions that result from the central phenomenon are called strategies in grounded theory research (Creswell, 1998, p. 57). What are the strategies used by deans when petitions come to them? What strategies do deans employ to develop new policies and to facilitate new programs? The strategies that deans employ can be divided into two main categories: strategies regarding petitions and policies and program development policies. The strategies used with regards to petitions and policies include the following:

- Assesses and evaluates minimum standards
- Reads petitions to determine the rationale.
- Works collaboratively with assistant/associate deans, and staff to obtain needed information.

- Reads written policy, including legal documents; consults with local and global academic community.
- Considers the amount of time it might take to change policies.
- Meets with academic community to discuss new ideas and policies.
- Adapts policies to meet the needs of the academic community based on local, state, and global events.

Strategies involved with program development proposals include the following:

- Works with the academic community adapting programs that respond to the needs of the state in order to grow and develop innovative programs.
- Reads program proposals at different stages and makes suggestions for improvement.

Assesses and Evaluates Minimum Standards

At the core of examining petitions, determining policies, and developing new programs, is the assessment and evaluation of minimum standards. Prior to making decisions on petitions, or developing new policies the minimum standard is considered. This assessment and evaluation of the minimum standard is such an important and essential strategy that examples of how and when graduate deans consider the minimum standards are given throughout this dissertation.

Reads Petitions to Determine the Rationale

Petitioners are often required to write out a rationale for their request. Dean Two pointed out that it was the written documentation that was important and not the ability of the student to convince the dean one way or the other. Dean Two explained:

> It is not the presentation that matters to me; it is the facts. And so the student has the ability to file a petition. The petition is not limited in any way. They can

write letters, they can do whatever they want, and we will often come back with a second request for information.

Dean Ten encouraged the staff to have the student drop off the petition without meeting anyone since in his view it should take less time. Dean Two employed two additional strategies to help with petitions. One strategy was to give a letter to every student who was filing a petition letting him or her know that the petition will be handled, and another strategy was to write a response to the petitioners. Here is the description of the letter given to students at Dean Two's university once a petition is filed; it is a strategy other deans may wish to try. To my knowledge, none of the other deans in the study handled petitions this way:

> We have a letter that we hand to the student that comes to the desk that says, 'We are very interested in your case. Your case will receive very careful review. It will be reviewed by three separate people and the final recommendation will be made and you will get a response within a very short period of time.'

Four of the ten institutions posted petition forms on their websites, indicating they required a written petition be submitted for review. It is my experience that a written rational plays a key role in helping to understand what really occurred. A written rational has also helped me ask better questions of others who are associated with the request. For example, a request to extend an incomplete grade is enhanced by a written explanation as to the need, as well as a discussion with the faculty member about the circumstances surrounding the extension.

Works Collaboratively with Assistant/Associate Deans, and Staff

It was obvious from the interviews that the deans did not make decisions lightly. They often consulted with their assistant or associate deans and they also relied on the help that their staff provided. Dean One summarized this by saying, "Sometimes I grab ...an associate dean who's here and I say we've got to walk around the block because I'm not sure I'm doing the right thing in this area." Dean Two talked about the "significant help" that the staff provide. Dean Nine mentioned that the associate dean "handles those decisions directly" and the dean would be available if there were problems (which in the words of the dean is "not really very common though.") Dean Four worked closely with an associate dean. The associate dean brought a recommendation to the dean. Dean Four says, "He brings them to me to sign... he handles pretty much the standard exceptions, if you will. He knows the policies and he can tell them what they need to know. He'll bring a recommendation in to me." This was echoed by Dean Two: "He does essentially act in my stead as a proxy, bringing ... most of the things to my attention when it involves policy and what not, but as far as dealing with individual student petitions and so on he's likely to be the person that makes a lot of those decisions."

The deans in the study did not describe any informal assessment that occurred prior to making a decision on a request. As an assistant dean, I often consult with faculty on issues that students raise so that I gain more than one perspective. It may be that the assistant/associate deans and the staff who work with the deans are responsible for this informal assessment. Deans did describe staff making recommendations including preparing written documentation to assist in decisions. Dean Seven described the weekly meetings that are held with the associate dean:

> We have a formal meeting every week. We might talk every day or every other day about issues that come up. Those discussions relate to strategic issues like what are we going to do in terms of a policy (or) here's a problem with a specific student. The student is petitioning to get out of some kind of requirement. What should we do? Here's a unique situation that our policy doesn't seem to cover, what do we do in that case?

The deans in the study relied on their associate/assistant deans to make decisions and to make recommendations. It was not clear from the interviews the percentage of petitions that were approved by the associate/assistant dean without consultation of the dean. This practice was mentioned by many of the deans in the study signifying collaborative relationships between the dean and associate/assistant dean.

Dean Eight talked about how the associate dean worked to get to know "his value scheme" on issues. While it is important for the associate/assistant dean to have a clear understanding of the value system of the dean, in my experience, it is important for the associate/assistant dean and the dean to have conversations that help to clarify their viewpoints. For example, when I was interviewed for the assistant dean position at UND, the dean looked out the window on a sunny day and asked me if it was raining. When I told him it wasn't, he asked me again. I was puzzled by the exchange and then he informed me that it was my job to express any differences in opinion since it was his view that differences of opinion strengthened the rationale and the decision. Looking at issues from many vantage points is critical in decision-making.

Reads Written Policy, Including Legal Documents; Consults with Local and Global Academic Community

The Deans consulted written policy, such as information that would be in academic catalogs and departmental handbooks to better understand departmental guidelines. Legal guidance was sought by the deans to ensure that their responses were consistent with the laws. Deans mentioned looking for the laws and reading them to better understand what the legal ramifications were prior to making a decision on a petition or policy. Deans also mentioned working with staff members who familiarized themselves with legal documents to help address a particular case.

There were a few examples given in which the deans had met with an angry or upset individual who wanted to argue about a policy and then when the deans read the policy to the individual, it became less hostile. Dean Ten described an instance in which a student was angry and upset about being told that she could not work in addition to her assistantship. Here is the description of this event:

> I sat and looked at the policy with her and I talked with her about the policy and she goes, 'well I'm only asking to work 6 (additional) hours a week.' Well, it's like if you'd read the policy you'd see that that's (acceptable). I think the problem with that one is that financial aid and personnel didn't ask the right questions.... So this was a very frustrated student who was running around being sent from office to office and finally ends up in my office very angry.

Considers the Amount of Time it Might Take to Change Policies

What was clear in this study is that minimum standards were continually being assessed. If a number of petitions came in on one particular issue, the deans might reassess the policy to decide if the policy should change. Another consideration was

time. If a major policy is going to change, it is going to take time for that to happen. For example, graduate faculty changes to the constitution took time, as described by two of the deans in the study. At issue for Dean 8 was allowing new faculty to serve as advisors to students since in his view these faculty members offered the new, up-to-date knowledge that a "veteran" faculty member might not have. Dean Ten described the long process to add a new graduate faculty category for the allied health area.

Koropchak, Rice, Mead, and Wilson (2003) talked about increasing the number of state funds devoted to fellowships and teaching assistantships with the hope that these increases could lead to attracting a greater number of graduate students to the campus. Koropchak, Rice, Mead, and Wilson (2003) described a proposal that was put forth from the SIU-Carbondale campus to the state to increase the stipend levels for graduate assistantships. These types of proposals that benefit the students require advocacy on the part of the dean. It takes time to prepare a proposal like this.

Many of the deans spoke about the process of getting a new policy changed on their campuses. Dean Two describes the process in the following fashion,

> Not only did it have to pass a general vote but each unit then had to create policies for its own particular standards for them to be forwarded to the executive committee for approval by the executive committee.

Timing is also an issue. As Dean Nine said, "There is a delicate timing process, an orchestrated process to this." Dean Nine was referring to a policy he had initiated to raise student's tuition to hire additional faculty in specific academic areas. The amount of time it would take to change a policy should be a consideration.

Meets with Academic Community to Discuss New Ideas and Policies

Deans convene groups of students and faculty to discuss policy issues. Sometimes they convene a group to gather feedback, other times they are in formal meetings with various committees who set policies for the campus. Dean Four asked to present a new policy to the student association so that they would be aware of the policy. It is clear that consultation was part of the practice of Dean Four:

> When we were working through the issues on the stipend (levels) I went and presented that to them [the student association]. I wanted to get their feedback. If I have policy issues that are going to affect graduate students, I'll take it to them.

Dean Four also consults with faculty:

> There is the interdisciplinary executive committee...that runs the interdisciplinary Ph.D. program. They meet once a month. I chair that committee. We talk about policy issues, interdisciplinary issues between units, that sort of thing.

Dean Nine is proactive and meets with the graduate student organization whenever they wish. They might meet to talk about ideas or policies the dean is considering. The Dean tells them to bring as many graduate students as they want just so they "can come and break bread and complain." The Dean is quick to say that it usually does not turn out to be a complaint session but rather a sharing session. Here is part of the description of one particular meeting:

> They have lunch and they ask questions about what's going on. Why was such and such done? Or what do you see for the future? Or, what do you think this means? We discuss new ideas. I remember one lunch where...I was talking about how...I'd like to increase our pool of teaching assistants such that we have

enough effort available to create a new kind of program. ...a mentoring program for undergraduates that the graduate students could participate in. ... The point of this whole thing was that when I talked to these graduate students about this--these were from a wide range of disciplines (philosophy, speech communication, English, engineering, and agriculture) and they got excited about it... they got excited about the idea of being given this type of opportunity.

Also during the interview with Dean Nine, the importance of consensus building was raised. The context of the comment came in a discussion about a previous administrator who had been fired by the board of trustees without an explanation. This action by the board created faculty distrust. In his words,

It is very important to build consensus, otherwise you can just get hammered. Every decision that can be made will be viewed with skepticism and with ulterior motives...It can be a very negative situation for morale across campus...We are trying to increase our profile as a university. We are trying to raise our standards and shoot for higher targets and success. This reputation isn't based on one department or one group of departments, it is based on the campus as a whole. The average success of the campus as a whole, all across from arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, engineering, and so on. That is the boat rises as with success in all different areas...We want to provide an environment which recognizes excellence and encourages success across the broad spectrum of disciplines on the campus. At least in my opinion that's the way that you will be most likely to substantially improve.

From these comments, it was clear to me that the dean believed in consulting with the academic community. His passion for high standards was evident. He was striving to infuse academic excellence throughout all academic areas.

Adapts Policies to Meet the Needs of the Academic Community Based on Local, State, and Global Events

One example of adapting graduate school policies to help meet the economic development needs of the state is the consortium in which Wright State University participates. Wright State University is part of a consortium of graduate engineering schools called the Dayton Area Graduate Studies Institute (DAGSI). The consortium consists of state-assisted institutions, a private, and a federal institution. Ultimately the goal of the consortium is to "support economic growth and development in southwest Ohio, particularly in the aerospace, automotive, information, and related industrial sectors, by strengthening the intellectual infrastructure of the region" (Dayton Area Graduate Studies Institute, n.d., para 1). Students would need to follow the policies that had been adopted for this consortium. Unlike traditional graduate programs, in which students generally are limited in the number of classes they can take outside of their home institution, students are allowed to take up to one-half of their program at the other participating institutions.

Global events have brought forth policy changes. For example, the events of 911 brought changes to the VISA process making it more difficult for international students to enter the United States. In light of 9/11, changes are occurring with regard to academic policies. Students at Dean One's institution (mostly undergraduates took advantage of this policy) used to be able to stay out for a year if they were struggling academically. The policy for international students typically allowed a reduction in

credits, in order to give them time to adjust to a new language and the American system of education. Now, international students are only allowed one semester of course load reduction. They must be continuously enrolled full-time or else they have to return to their country. Dean One talks about the monitoring of credits and says,

> It's sort of parental thing. In fact the law says, and the requirements [say it], you have to track the student. You have to ensure that they are full time students. You have to ensure what they are doing. And in Graduate School we have no class requirement. You are responsible for tracking that student and ensuring under SEVIS that you report to the government that the student is a full-time student, that they are there on the campus pursuing classes. [That] they are enrolled. Otherwise you've got to tell the government and they start to deport the student.

Dean One went on to talk about the importance of keeping track of one consistent address for international students.

> If that address doesn't match what the international center is telling on the SEVIS report we get a notification from the government that says, "You've got to resolve this and tell us why the student's not living where they are supposed to be living."

In the current environment, perhaps global events have required the most attention on the part of the academic community. When Dean Four was asked what the most pressing issue was, the reply "dealing with the changes from 9/11" was the quick response.

Works with the Academic Community Adapting Programs that Respond to the Needs of the State

Deans in this study discussed the need to be responsive to the state. One clear example is the dean who is encouraging faculty members to offer a criminal justice degree program rather than maintain a sociology department that is strictly geared to offering the traditional sociology degree. With a prison so close to this particular institution, there is a need to train individuals already working in the criminal justice system. It is the dean's strategy to work with the academic community to help adapt current programs to address needs in the state. This dean has work ahead of him to get the faculty to adapt their program:

> We're in a depressed part of the state you know, a rural part of the state, and we've got a lot of prisons around here. And there are lots of folks providing leadership in the prison system who could really benefit from a master's degree in criminology for example. But we have a sociology department that views itself as sort of above criminology. They say if these guys want to quit their jobs working in the prison and come to school and study social theory and things like that, we're here. We're not going to think about how the things we know apply to criminal justice and design a program that would actually allow them to come on a part-time basis.

Dean Seven had a group of faculty from many different areas on campus wanting to propose a program that they felt would address some needs in the state:

> A group of faculty, some from the Psychology department, some from the School of Medicine and one from our department of Economics came to me and they said, 'We have an idea. We want to start a new master's degree program in health

outcomes.' Health outcomes means using research to develop patient care procedures methodologies. For example, there are lots of ways to treat heart attacks. They can give you bypass surgery or maybe transplants. They can give you various kinds of medications and so forth. But, the best procedure will depend on the history of the patients. It'll depend on knowledge about clinical trials and what's the most effective way. It's a very complex decision-making process for any individual patient as to what the best outcome is. So there's a whole field of study about outcomes, research and how to apply research findings to individual patient care. So they wanted to start a master's degree program in preparing students to use the latest scientific discoveries and apply it to patient care. And so they came to me and said, 'You know we have lots of people in our institutions and our affiliated hospitals who are interested in this. Do you want to start a master's degree program? How do we do it?' So I met with them and advised them about what it would take to put together the program

As the dean described the program proposal, I sensed his excitement about blending scientific discoveries and applying it to practical health care.

Reads Program Proposals at Different Stages and Makes Suggestions to Improve

In talking to the deans, it became clear that faculty members writing program development proposals were benefited when deans read the proposals with an eye towards what was needed for approval. The program proposal was not something that was easily put together but rather needed to address issues of concern to members of the state system. Two of the deans mentioned how faculty members valued their contributions when preparing new program proposals. Thus, the strategy that the deans

in this study employed was to read program proposals in different stages of development in order to make suggestions to strengthen or improve the proposal. Dean Seven works with faculty on the proposals at every stage. As he put it,

> I work with the faculty. I might come up with an idea for a new degree program. I meet with them and talk to them about how you put together a quality proposal. What you want to put in there. How do you build appropriate budgets? What steps we have to go through to get approval.

Here is how Dean Four described their campus process.

> We have a system on our campus where if a new program wants to start they have to develop what's called a pre-proposal. This is basically a short white paper, two- three pages, maybe five pages. (Stating) what's the need, why you want to do it, what resources do you envision? What timeline do you envision? And myself, the vice provost, the chair of faculty senate, two of the vice provosts, convene, review the proposals and decide which we think should go forward to full proposal stage and which ones we think should wait because we don't have the resources, the faculty, whatever. So we make the first cut.

Since a committee that included the dean reviewed proposals, faculty at Dean Four's institution might benefit from involving the dean early in the process. This might be true for other institutions. Many of the deans in the study were being asked the same key questions such as, "What is the need for the new program?" or "What resources are necessary?"

Context

In qualitative research, context refers to the particular set of conditions in which the strategies occur. Thus, for this study, the context was the review of rules and regulations and the review of policies on behalf of an individual who seeks such a review for whatever the circumstances. Each time a petition was submitted to the graduate dean, it was considered within the context of a review of rules, regulations, and policies. As figure six shows it is a dynamic process. As petitions, policies, and program proposals come forth, the review of rules, regulations, and policies occur.

Intervening Conditions

There are an array of intervening conditions in this study including: administrators, faculty, students, staff, formal governance procedures, informal and formal traditions espoused by faculty, departments, and the university itself, economic development considerations, accreditation standards, national trends, and world events. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 131) define intervening conditions as those that mitigate or otherwise alter the impact of causal conditions on the phenomena. The intervening conditions in this study were as close as the students who visited the dean or as far reaching as world events.

Administrators

Graduate deans in this study worked with administrators, including provosts, college deans, and presidents or chancellors. A discussion about each follows.

Provosts

It is clear why working with the provost is critical, since all ten deans reported to the provost for graduate education issues. In this study, three of the deans in addition to

being graduate deans, were vice provosts or associate provosts. Three of the deans also handled research activities for their universities. Deans who have research responsibilities report to the provost for the academic side of the graduate school and to their president or chancellor for research activities.

Three of the graduate deans in this study specifically mentioned working with provosts on new program development. One dean talked about the need for the provost to have a strong voice regarding the development of new programs. Graduate deans in this study also worked with provosts on the program review process, which facilitates maintaining high standards of programs. They also worked with provosts to enhance opportunities for students, such as increasing stipends for graduate students, raising overall tuition rates to bring additional resources to the campus that support graduate students, modifying changes to the graduate faculty constitution, developing recruitment plans that bring a diverse faculty to campus, health insurance plans, and gaining financial support for programs.

At one of the institutions, a group of students came to the dean of the graduate school asking for support of adjunct faculty in a specialized program, since (in their view) this person was vital to maintain the high quality of the program. To help solve the problem, the dean worked with the provost and the departments on a financial plan. One dean mentioned talking to the president through the provost about setting strategic priorities. Deans regularly have scheduled meetings with the provost, and three of the deans brought up individual meetings with the provost that are scheduled on an as-needed basis. For questions involving academic areas, the provost was the person they went to for advice.

The deans indicated the support they received from their provosts. Dean Nine shared this about the working relationship with the provost:

> Our provost here is not a micromanager. He doesn't try to tell the various academic units that he's over how to run their programs. He's generally supportive of our initiatives and very upfront in telling us if there's something that he views as a problem or would disagree with."

Dean Two said that he preferred working with a provost outside of the dean's discipline. Dean Two explained that it is easier to talk to the provost about the direction the institution should be headed without them thinking, "Well, I would do it this way." Dean Two believed that the provost could concentrate on the bigger picture.

College Deans

Graduate deans in this study work closely with college deans. Four of the graduate deans highlighted the work they had done with college deans on their campuses to bring forth new program proposals. Obtaining "documented buy-in from deans of respective units" was considered to be essential. In examining the responses to a scenario, in which deans were asked to respond to a case study about a faculty member bringing forth a new program proposal idea, four of the ten deans mentioned contacting college deans to determine the level of support from them for a new proposed program. Graduate deans often meet with college deans to pool resources and to set priorities. Deans in the study had one-on-one conversations with college deans. Dean Five said, "A week doesn't go by that I don't meet with a dean or an associate dean in every college." However, Dean Two felt strongly that it was important to meet with the deans in the context of the provost's meetings rather than talking to them alone. "I think if you went

around dean to dean they might just think you're a meglomaniac on the loose. Because this is perceived as an attempt to aggregate power."

Dean Five met "hostility" from college deans on a plan that he had developed with the provost restricting assistantships. He said, "I knew that they (the deans) wouldn't like it but the intensity that they brought to the fight and the level of hostility about it sort of surprised me." As Table 3 showed assistantships at the universities in the study are offered through departments, except in two cases involving interdisciplinary programs. This may be why the graduate dean, in an effort to limit assistantships, met with resistance. In this specific case, tuition waivers were given for all levels of assistantships and 95% of the graduate students were on an assistantship.

President/Chancellor

The president sets the tone for much of the campus with the development of strategic plans or initiatives involving long-term planning. Strategic plans could certainly influence standards. In a best case scenario, if a plan calls for an increased number of graduate students and with it comes an increase in the number of fellowships, scholarships, graduate assistantships, and higher stipends, the quality of the graduate students most likely will increase thus improving the quality of graduate programs on campus. Korpchak, Rice, Mead, and Wilson (2003) pointed out that graduate students contribute to research productivity at universities and that "the size and quality of the graduate student body strongly influences the level of research productivity generated by the campus"(p. 22). Presidents can influence the quality of graduate programs by working together with administrators to create a culture of graduate education.

Six of the ten deans talked about the culture of graduate education and how it is evolving. Dean Three described the following:

> Two years ago people would say, 'Well, let's cut the heat off in the buildings over Christmas to save money.' I'd say, 'We've got animals. When your research function is going on 24/7 it is not always recognized. Now I think it is getting to be more and more so.

Getting the message out that graduate education is a year-round research endeavor is part of creating a graduate culture. By graduate culture, the deans were most likely referring to the pursuit of knowledge through research and scholarly activities. Graduate deans often have to work with presidents to help prioritize research and scholarly activities. Dean Three said, " I would like to have essentially the whole university recognize the fact that we have strong graduate programs and research functions." He had worked to keep buildings open and maintained over holidays, because animal care units needed for research had to be tended and experiments were conducted year-round. Since the majority of the students on the campuses of this study are undergraduates, campus administration tends to focus on the needs of the undergraduate, leaving issues of graduate education out of the discussion. No graduate dean will argue with Dean Seven who wished graduate education "to be a more prominent part of the institutional planning process and goals...with more attention, therefore resources, focused on graduate education."

Faculty

One of the gauges that graduate deans use to determine how they are doing is through the feedback they gain from faculty. Five of the deans in this study commented

on the feedback they receive from faculty. Dean Seven talked about the general nature of the feedback saying,

> You'll get feedback from the faculty, but again ...they are not going to sit down with you, give you a detailed critique of your performance. Well they might say, 'You really helped me with this, you're so helpful. You've just been great on this specific project.' It's that kind of feedback.

Eight of the ten deans were asked, "How do you know you're doing a good job?" The deans were unanimous in how difficult it is to know how one is doing. Dean One said, "You don't and you question it all the time, well, I do. I mean I'm never sure I'm doing a good job. I always worry about whether that what I've done is right." Dean Eight gave this analysis.

Well, to be honest this is the single most difficult job I've ever had. I think administrators are always unsure whether they are doing a good job or not. I think you always have the question in the back of your ...I think it's very hard to get a personal inner sense of doing a good job.

It was noted that decisions were sometimes formed based on the input from the faculty. Initiatives that the dean was leading sometimes garnered support from the faculty and sometimes not. As Dean Ten said,

> I have made a few executive decisions based on the input of the faculty and justified my reasoning to them. Typically, they understand and support the initiative if the basis is sound. In some instances, I have just had to state that the ship was leaving the dock and that some people may have to be left behind.

In my opinion, deans could, if they chose, solicit input from the faculty. If this were done, the deans may have to be willing to make changes based on the comments.

Deans in this study often spoke about the issues that faculty initiated. Dean Ten offered this example,

> The immediate one that seems everyone is really after right now is money. They want assistantships, they want (tuition) waivers. That's probably the most common request I get...The next issue that comes up are groups of faculty that are concerned about problems in their department or program but don't know how to deal with it. (These problems) may or may not involve the graduate school but for some reason they feel that if they talk to me about it there might be some way that I can help. And that is matters of animosity between faculty, ethical dilemmas that they find themselves in with their colleagues, problems that students are being put in because of the way one of their colleagues works with students or deals with students. And I hear that a lot. I get e-mails that way. I get phone calls of people wanting to talk

The deans in this study work with faculty on developing new programs, creating new policies, discussing graduate education related issues with graduate councils and graduate directors. While faculty members are primarily the ones developing new programs, deans can act as monitors and protectors of institutional standards.

Students

One might think that in a decentralized environment, deans would not see many students. In this study, two of the ten deans did not meet with students; one was from a decentralized environment and the other was from a centralized environment. Whether

deans met with students may have more to do with personality than whether the graduate school was centralized or decentralized.

The primary reason students visited the graduate deans in this study was because they had a problem. Ultimately, they were hoping that the dean could remedy the situation. Eight of the ten deans met with students, while two of the deans did not. One of the deans who did not meet with students said that he was often criticized for not meeting with them but that he preferred students write out their concerns and have his staff review the petitions. His point was the following: "How on earth do you fairly provide time for whatever number of students that are in distress at any given time out of a community of 30,000 students?"

The majority of the student problems described by deans in this study centered on process or policy issues. Students wondered why they were not given an assistantship, they wanted to change programs, they wanted to work another job in addition to their assistantship, or they were having difficulty with their department or advisor and they preferred the dean to intercede. For each of these examples, at least three of the eight deans who saw students cited these as reasons students visited with them. One dean described his role as an "ombudsman." Another dean mentioned that generally when students ask to see the dean they "want to speak to the person in charge. They will not take an answer from anyone else on matters. And frequently it doesn't change the outcome at all."

Petitions often involve students and sometimes prompted discussion between deans and departments. Dean Nine commented, "Sometimes the faculty or students, or departments are not happy with what my associate dean does so there may be meetings to

discuss those things. [It's] not really very common though...sometimes students are upset and they just want to have an opportunity to talk to somebody." Dean Two described the situation in light of the decentralized nature:

> The nature of being decentralized is that rarely can I solve someone's problems here. I need to be an advocate for the student, call the faculty member or the associate dean, or payroll, or whomever and try to work out a solution.

There was general consensus amongst the deans in the study that students sometimes need someone to listen. Deans can also help students by engaging in conversations with other people on campus who potentially can assist.

Four of the ten deans talked about their roles in initiating conversations with students or giving formal presentations. One was an advisor to the graduate student senate. Two deans gave presentations to the graduate student organizations on their campuses and one dean offered to host a lunch as many times as the students were interested. Dean Nine said, "They have lunch and they ask questions about what's going on, why was such in such done? Or what do you see for the future? Or, what do you think this means? We discuss new ideas."

Deans' interactions with students are not always direct, but often through their staff. Three of the deans talked about making changes to their offices so that they were "student friendly" or "user friendly" offices. Dean Eight felt there was enhanced retention and recruiting of students because of these efforts by staff.

Staff

Of primary concern to deans was how the staff interacted with students, faculty, and other staff on campus. Dean Nine emphasized being "student user friendly" saying,:

> One of the first things that I did was to try to make the Graduate School more student user friendly. I tried to impress upon the staff immediately, their impact, their involvement in the educational process. That they can have a positive or negative impact on a graduate student's experience.

Dean Nine had this to say about how he hired staff.

> I definitely am not a micromanager. My goal is when I hire people ... I hire excellent people. I give them the general direction and let them do their jobs... If you hire the right kind of people, micromanaging them is going to ruin their morale.

Dean One attributed having good staff to "hiring the right staff." He added, "it's a matter that it's infectious, when you do good things, staff tend to move up to try and keep up and do that."

Eight of the ten deans have a staff member delegated to overseeing the day-to-day activities of their offices. The title of this day-to-day person varies from assistant and associate dean to executive director and coordinator. For all of these eight deans, the day-to-day person would be the first one to see students, review petitions, and make recommendations to the dean.

The dean's assistant, whether he or she holds the title of assistant, associate, director, or coordinator, is also very often the one overseeing members of the staff. One dean estimated approximately 10% of every week was spent with the assistant dean. "Just seeing where things are, who's doing what, who's assigned what." Another 25% of this dean's time was spent with other coordinators in the office. Dean Nine commented that there was no need for meetings with the entire staff, since the associate dean met

with them stating, "There wouldn't be a reason to have an associate dean of the graduate school, for example, if I were meeting with all of the staff. He's my representative. He's my intermediary between the staff in the graduate school."

The staff members' functions varied depending on the office's role in graduate education. In the centralized graduate schools, staff members were involved with admissions, assistantships, and records, including graduation audits. Programs in centralized graduate schools may make admissions decisions, but the letter of admittance comes from the graduate dean. In decentralized graduate schools, their roles varied. Decentralized schools tend to give all of the oversight of admissions decisions over to the departments. In fact, one dean said that they were not always notified as to what students were even attending. The three institutions in this study with interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs had oversight by the graduate school staff even though graduate education overall was decentralized. For these interdisciplinary programs, their budget was derived from the Graduate School. Dean Seven described the role this way:

> We handle admissions, we track students, we set up committees, we do all the things that the departments do for the other degree program... For the interdisciplinary program we have a coordinator in each discipline. So 27 disciplines, 27 coordinators. These are faculty members who serve in a management capacity within the units. We have regular meetings with those coordinators to talk about policies, talk about issues that come up. To talk about interdisciplinary issues. We provide a training manual. We go over the procedures with them. We have a regular process set up with those coordinators.

It is the role of the graduate schools, whether centralized or decentralized to ensure that minimum standards and established policies of graduate education are being met.

Formal Governance

Written policies and procedures, graduate faculty constitutions, graduate executive committees, the formal governance of a university, and the university's relationship to the board influences the graduate dean as a standards bearer. The way the university is governed plays a role in the decision-making ability of the dean, but it is not clear how much. It was not, however, the intention of this study to determine whether centralization or decentralization of graduate study affected the decision-making ability of the dean.

Bolman and Deal (1991) believe that "all organizations contain multiple realities, and every event can be interpreted in a number of ways" (p. 322). The process of decision-making as described by Bolman and Deal (1991) would be interpreted differently in four different "frames" (p. 323). These frames include the structural frame, human resource frame, political frame and symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 323). It would be advantageous for a graduate dean to work across those four frames.

There are decentralized graduate schools in this study where the student would try to negotiate with the department or program and with the college and a request for an exception would not come to the graduate dean except in rare occasions. For one school in this study with strong faculty governance procedures, the graduate school was not even notified which students had been admitted to the programs. In this case, the dean was active in helping to shape policies that the faculty put forth. For others, the graduate

school prepared the final admittance letter to the graduate student, and in these cases, the graduate dean had much more say in which students were admitted. For some of the deans in the study, a committee outside of the graduate school ruled on graduate student petitions. One dean explained that students can appeal the dean's decision to the vice provost for academic affairs but since he held both titles he recused himself from a reconsideration of his own decision and transmitted the appeal to a senior vice provost for personnel.

During the interviews, the deans described what it took to get a new program approved. The level of activity required of the dean by the board to bring forth new proposals varied. Some of the deans were on state advisory committees that recommended to the board which new program proposals should move forward. Dean Three visited eight or nine times a year with the state board to advise them on such matters and operated under "a set of guidelines and new program changes that is quite extensive."

Informal Traditions Espoused by Faculty, Departments, and the University

Despite the fact that deans relied on written policies and legal documents, sometimes the unwritten rule was critical. Dean Two described a situation in which he had denied a petition. He said:

> It's a curious, it's a very curious operation because it comes at you piecemeal from different places and there is also culture behind it and you think, 'Well, that's outrageous, I'm not going to approve that,' only to have a tidal wave of responses because you violated something they held sacred.

The one sure way that deans find out about informal traditions is through the faculty. I asked Dean Two how he you discovered what was sacred. Here is his response:

> Faculty have a way of delivering the news. They write the angry letter or give you the angry phone call that says, 'We've been doing this for thirty years…' It was clear from the deans in this study that faculty members do not hesitate to e-mail or telephone with concerns about an unwritten policy.

One of the more frequent requests that come on a petition form to Dean Two were change of grade requests with the reason for the grade change being additional work. There was a request to change a grade for a student when the course had been taken twenty years ago. The dean denied the request of the faculty. As a result, the dean was asked to explain the reason for the denial to a subcommittee of the University senate. In the end, the dean gathered many petitions together and shared them with the subcommittee. According to Dean two, this seemed to "quell the enthusiasm of that committee."

When I asked Dean Ten how he knew he was doing a good job he laughed and stated the following:

> Sometimes I wonder. Sometimes I really wonder. I get some good feedback generally probably more often than not from the faculty in that they seem to at least support what I'm trying to do. Even though they don't always agree with it. So I feel that … the other deans also tend to support the graduate school and the direction we're going. Again, even though they do not always agree with it, I've had conversations where they wonder why didn't this get approved or that get approved? But generally, I think they are supportive of the fact that we at least

hold the line on certain issues relative to standards and ah, but it's tough. I guess frequently I question am I doing a good job. And I probably always will. I probably always should. But it's hard sometimes to determine if something that you do is immediately the right thing to do or not.

Through the course of the interview, Dean Ten talked about new ideas that he was trying to implement. The impression was given to me that some of these new ideas may contradict with informal traditions.

Faculty governance can take on its own informal traditions. Dean Two talked about the formation of a faculty union that had occurred four to five years ago requiring the governance structure to change to accommodate the union. He commented that the graduate council had survived despite the faculty union and attributed this to a long standing tradition of faculty governance.

Economic Development

Two of the deans interviewed were spending a large majority of their time helping to create centers of excellence in areas that were a direct result of funding received through partnerships with businesses and other universities. Dean Three indicated there was nothing normal about his schedule due to the effort involved in establishing partnerships and making them successful. Funding provided through these partnerships could enhance graduate education by being able to offer competitive fellowships and assistantships and ultimately attract high quality graduate students. These collaborative efforts, in my view, could improve the caliber of graduate students and raise the standards of these institutions.

Dean Seven presented two sides to the role that economic development could play in setting standards for graduate education. On the positive side, Dean Seven stated that "universities are making the case for their role in economic development and the legislature is responding with additional funding." Dean Seven believed that the funding "has allowed the universities to expand their science programs and may enhance the quality of our science departments and increase opportunities for graduate students." Dean Seven cautioned that there may be "potential downsides to using the economic argument in garnering more support" including being held "accountable for short-term economic down turns in the state's economy, and in addition, the traditional mission of the university may be distorted toward job creation and other short term returns on investment."

Economic development would "add to the donor pool" adding "dollars for research and consequently graduate education" according to Dean Four. It was also pointed out by Dean Four that "in some cases the economic sector has voiced the need for certain types of graduate trained employees and various graduate schools have responded by creating the professional master's degree and graduate certificate programs". Dean One believed that economic development initiatives could impact student quality. If universities had more money and could offer higher stipends, Dean One believed that "we will attract far better students and that will drive the quality of the student body and the quality of the educational experience exponentially upward...more money to invest in education is a good thing."

Accreditation Standards

While the deans stated that accreditation processes have an impact upon standards for graduate education, there were not many specific examples in the interview data. Follow-up e-mail queries asking deans how accreditation processes effect standards for graduate education resulted in a few responses that basically said accreditation affects standards but did not explain how or why it did. Dean Eight said that a report on the status of a program can prompt a department "to sit down and take a look at themselves and say, 'Where do we want to be? And where do we want to go?" Dean Eight also spoke about using accreditation materials, such as the self-study, as a means "to build some of the knowledge and expertise among members of the graduate council about what's going on in other parts of the university."

National Trends

Graduate deans follow what other universities are doing to remain competitive and to get new ideas. Dean Eight talked about how a review of the institutions in their peer and aspirant peer group handled graduate faculty status helped convince others at the institution to make changes to their constitution regarding the criteria for graduate faculty status.

Dean Seven reported in the following statement that CGS meetings helped to provide the national standard.

> You get benchmarks and standards from meetings like this. [Dean Seven was interviewed at the annual CGS meeting.] You find out what other graduate deans are doing and what other schools are doing. You find out, 'Oh, my gosh, we should be doing this in our school. Look at what

> they're doing. OK? Look at their great assessment program they have for students and we don't have anything in place, or whatever it might be.' So there are some national standards that you can get from meetings like this or from reading what's going on.

When Dean Two was asked what top pressing issue was on his desktop his quick response was "creating an academically responsible environment." Grade change requests were common at Dean Two's institution and the dean felt that this was eroding academic integrity. A comparison to Berkeley was made in Dean Two's statement:

> The very top one is the larger vision of creating an academically responsible environment. And I think that would do more than bring us into alignment. What I see when I get on the web and look at places like the other AAU public institutions. Berkeley, for example, you may file your grades and once you file your grades, they're in. You can't change them unless you can demonstrate clerical error or some other kind of significant breach. That's it. You cannot change a grade at Berkeley.

World Events

Dean One is active in post 9/11 issues especially with regards to protecting research activities. Dean One is concerned about compliance issues and suggests that we must continually question, "how we balance that continuing quest to do good with the continuing threat that someone will misuse our results to do harm?" As was described earlier in Chapter IV, Dean One feels strongly that research results need to be able to be published and measures should be in place to protect students so that they can publish. Here is Dean One's recommendation:

> What we have to do and what the presidents of national academies have called on us to do is to very narrowly define what is dangerous to within that very narrowly defined arena. [We must] build high walls, meaning put it in the classified environment. Get it off of the academic campuses and get it out of the hands of the normal educational structure.

Dean One believes that there are "educational roles" that go along with this new environment. Dean One states,

> Is it a different environment? Are there new concerns? 'Yes.' And there are educational roles that go with understanding what those concerns are and communicating to the public.

Post 9/11 security measures have changed the VISA process for international students. The CGS is active in monitoring and making recommendations to government officials regarding visa regulations. In March 2004, Debra Stewart, president of CGS encouraged Congress and the administration to "continue to aggressively address the real and perceived problems in the visa process while appropriately assuring national security" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004b, p. 2). Stewart stated "the alarming declines in applications reported by CGS member graduate schools are in areas critical to maintaining the scientific enterprise and economic competitiveness of our country as well as the cultural and intellectual diversity that contributes to the international renown of U.S. graduate education" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004b, p. 2).

There is a fear that the number of international students applying to U.S. schools is decreasing; however, Dean One believes that the decrease is not necessarily due to

difficulties in obtaining visas but rather to "a pipleline of information seemingly that is discouraging some from applying to U.S. institutions."

Deans in this study mentioned the impact of inappropriate implementation of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) in countries such as China and India. Chinese and Indian students' scores were much higher than others scores, but it turned out that they were false. Standards can be affected if students are admitted based on high GRE scores and then they are not able to perform at the anticipated level.

Consequences

The phenomenon in this study was the graduate dean as guardian of standards and academic excellence. Each time a petition was filed, a new policy proposed, or a new program proposal came forth, the resulting action was a review of the rules, regulations and policies. What became clear in this study is that the dean's first response to requests forced a review of the rules and regulations. Sometimes the deans in this study maintained the rules. Other times, the rules were changed for a particular reason. Occasionally, requests for exceptions to a particular rule occurred repeatedly and would force a review of the rule. Standards may change due to the number of requests on a particular issue. If a number of petitions come in to the graduate dean, the dean may feel the need to examine the standard and decide whether it should stay the same. Intervening conditions in the form of telephone calls, e-mail requests, memos, and visits from administrators, faculty, students, and staff can influence the dean as standards bearer. Standards can also be modified to meet the changing landscape of graduate education. Part-time, evening, distance, and weekend programs are becoming quite popular and challenge existing standards. Interdisciplinary degree programs and certificate programs

are national trends that influence graduate education. Whether in the form of a petition, a request for a policy change, developing a new policy, or creating a new program, uppermost in the graduate dean's mind is the concern for standards. The graduate dean as guardian of standards and academic excellence views requests through this lens.

In Chapter V conclusions will be presented with a summary of the findings regarding the role of the graduate dean. In addition, a brief discussion of centralized and decentralized education and its relationship to standards will be included along with implications of the study, recommendations for further research, and reflections.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Conclusions, with a summary of the findings regarding the role of the graduate dean are presented in Chapter V. A brief discussion of centralized and decentralized education and its relationship to standards is included along with implications of the study, recommendations for further study, and reflections. This qualitative study utilized methodologies associated with a grounded theory approach to select data sources, design interview protocols, and to collect and analyze data. The intention of a grounded theory study, according to Creswell (1998, p. 56), is to "generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon, that relates to a particular situation." In this study, a theory has been developed using the research question, " what is the role of the graduate dean?" According to the Council of Graduate Schools, the role of the graduate school is to "define and support excellence in graduate education and the research and scholarly activities associated with it" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004c, p. 4). The graduate dean is the one to lead these responsibilities.

The participants selected for this study included ten graduate deans who on average had been graduate dean for over 5.45 years. The amount of time as dean ranged from one year to fourteen years. The total years of combined experience as graduate dean was 54.5 years. The backgrounds of the deans were varied. Seven were from the sciences including one in Microbiology, one in Physics, one in Biochemistry, two in

Chemistry, one in Physiology, and one in Nutrition. One dean held a degree in Music, and two came from Political Science. In Chapter III a brief biographical sketch of each of the deans were provided, along with a description of the ten institutions in the study. Chapter IV included a description of the ten coded interviews and responses to a case study. These interviews were analyzed for commonalities, resulting in the emergence of three categories including petitions, policies, and program development. Ten themes developed within these three categories. four themes for the category of petitions, three themes each for the categories of policies and program development.

Figure 6 is a diagram of the theoretical model describing the role of the graduate dean as guardian of standards and academic excellence in the context of the review of rules, regulations and policies. The causal conditions, including petitions, review of existing policies and/or the development of new policies, and program development proposals, influence the phenomenon, the dean as guardian of standards and academic excellence. Intervening conditions include administrators, faculty, students, staff, formal governance, traditions, economic development initiatives, accreditation standards, national trends, and world events. Nine strategies that the dean employs to handle the causal conditions were described in Chapter IV. An examination of the findings of this study indicated that graduate deans either modified or upheld the standards. Ultimately, the graduate deans in the study worked to establish minimum graduate education standards, whether they were in a centralized or decentralized graduate school environment. In fact, one of the strategies that deans employed was to assess and evaluate minimum base standards each time a petition came forward or policy was being evaluated or developed.

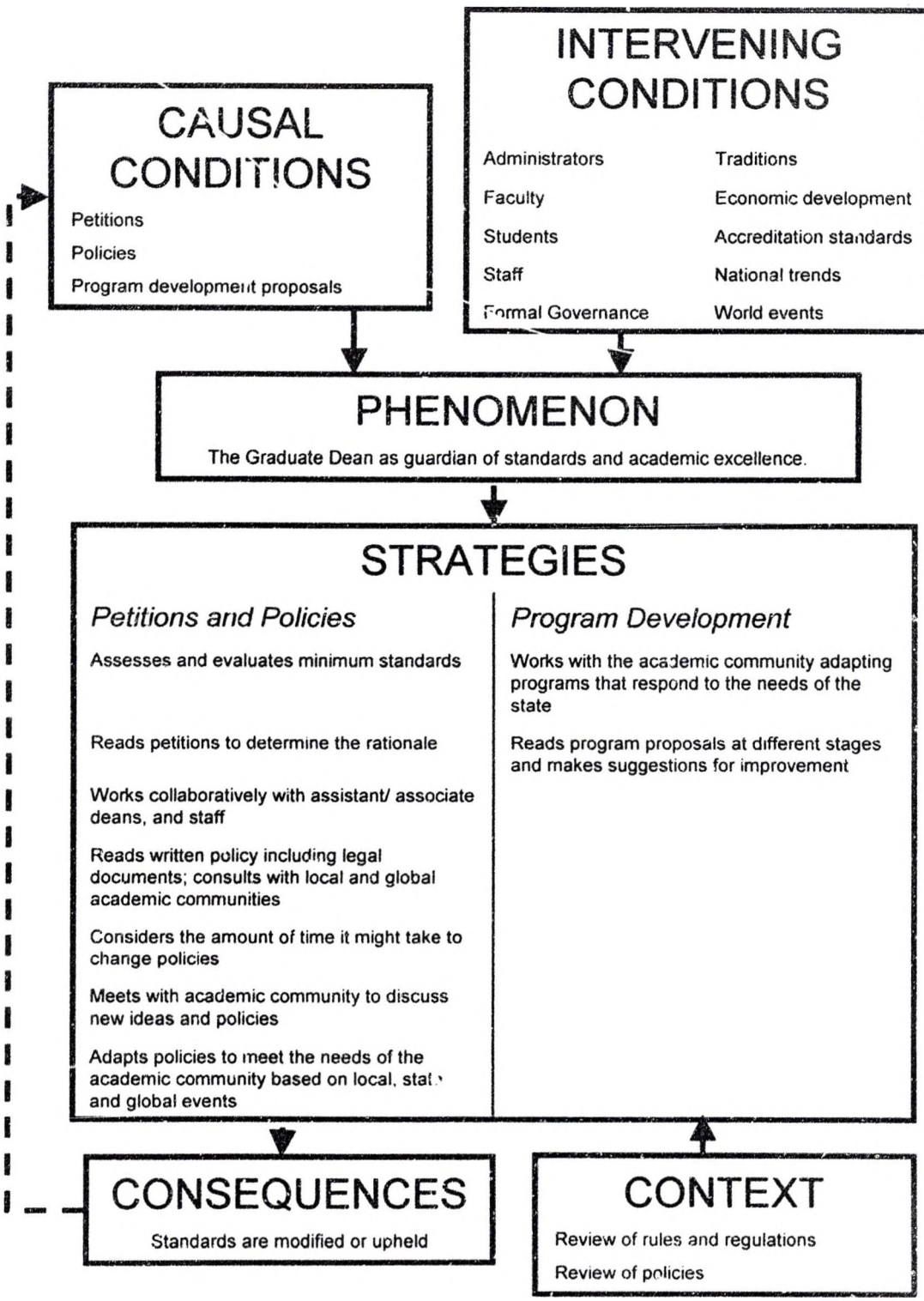


Figure 6. Theoretical Model Describing the Role of the Graduate Dean in Modifying and Upholding Standards.

As far back as the 1860's, discussions about standards for the master's degree were common. Harriman (1938) presents a concise "historical interpretation of status and definition" of the master's degree (p. 23). As was discussed in Chapter II, early meetings of the AAU served to "raise the standard of our weaker institutions" (Slate, 1994, p. 5) and concentrated on the "nature of the dissertation, the meaning of research, the conditions of fellowship awards, admission requirements, preparation for college teaching, the role of the master's degree, and foreign language requirements" (Walters, 1965, p. 16). The issue of standards remains a prominent focus today as universities work with accreditation bodies.

Graduate deans are committed to fostering a culture of graduate education. They strive to capture this culture of research and scholarship on their own campuses in which faculty and administrators work together to foster a spirit of academic excellence.

Deans and Their Roles

Deans work as guardians of standards in order to maintain high standards across campus. It made no difference, in this study, whether the dean worked in a more centralized graduate school environment or a decentralized environment, they all were involved in establishing minimum standards for graduate education. These standards help to create a climate of integrity on campuses. Deans often help to set minimum admission and graduation expectations.

Graduate deans in this study were "conductors" for the faculty, students, and campus administrators in terms of facilitating the development of innovative new graduate programs and helping to build, sustain, and improve the quality of programs. They were "ambassadors" and "advocates" both on and off campus in terms of policy and

program development, recruitment and retention of students, and research productivity. This role included helping to establish policies that were fair to students, such as advancing competitive stipend levels for students or advocating for a new program at the state level. Graduate deans in this study recognized strengths on their campus and used their personalities to influence and entice people to create a climate for graduate education.

Stewart (2000) described the role of the dean as "relationship builder" (p. 1). Kouzes and Posner (1993) presented a definition for leaders, calling them "servers and supporters, partners and providers"(p.7). Kouzes and Posner's (1993) premise was that leaders make more progress when they act as servers. In their words "serving and supporting unleashes much more energy, talent, and commitment than commanding and controlling"(Kouzes and Posner, 1993, p. 8). The graduate deans in this study were striving to serve and support graduate students, faculty, and administrators. Uppermost in the graduate dean's mind was whether standards of academic excellence were being upheld. Figure 7 visually represents the role of the dean. In my opinion, graduate deans should strive to be conductors, ambassadors and advocates. In all of their endeavors, of utmost consideration are standards and academic excellence, thus their title, "guardian of standards and academic excellence".

Figure 7. Conceptual Framework Describing the Role of the Graduate Dean.

Graduate Dean as "Guardian of Standards and Academic Excellence"

All of the graduate deans, whether they were asked to respond to a petition, review or develop a policy, or work with faculty on new program proposals, were concerned foremost with whether the standards set forth for graduate education were being maintained. They believed it was their role to uphold the standards of graduate education. Dean One said, "I'll confirm that a fair amount of the job is playing policeman." It became clear in analyzing the data that the deans used their judgment on whether standards could be modified but they did not do this lightly. Deans consulted other individuals, read legal documents to consult about policies, and compared their institutions with national standards. Deans became more inclined to change the standard as more exceptions or petitions came in asking for an exception to the rule. Certainly there were deans who were more inclined to talk about the petitions that came into their offices and others who concentrated more on the development of new policies and programs.

When petitions came to the deans of this study, the primary concern was whether the standards and measures of academic excellence were maintained if the petition was granted. This concern held when the dean was examining or developing new policies and when program proposals came to the office for feedback. The dynamic context in which this occurs is in the review of rules, regulations, and policies. It is a dynamic process as shown in Figure 6. The deans employ several strategies to make a decision about the petition, policy, or program proposal. Differentiation needs to be made between rules, regulations, policies, and standards. In this study, I used the term rule in a narrow sense. Many graduate schools require doctoral students to complete their degree in a certain time-frame. This is a rule. Some graduate schools have developed policies to account for students if they do not complete their doctoral degree in the designated time-frame. Policies are generally developed and approved by a group. In the case of graduate education, the graduate faculty and graduate council would be responsible for working with the dean on policies. Dean Four gave a good example of how rules and policies are carried out in the case of a student who had not completed his doctoral work due to extenuating circumstances. She said, "We have a policy that was established by graduate council that I can go back within a year. So I had to accept the policy by even going back just a little bit further." This comment implies that Dean Four went beyond the years allowed in the original policy. Dean Four changed the rules of the policy in order to accommodate the student. The standards are still in tact. The graduate dean did not allow the student to get out of completing all of the degree requirements nor did the dean lessen the expectation of the student. A dissertation of high quality and standards were required.

The graduate dean as the "guardian of standards and academic excellence" is the phenomenon in this study. This was identified as the most frequently discussed topic. CGS (2004c) encourages graduate deans to establish minimum admissions standards, minimum course requirements, a definition of what good academic standing means, and to set policies on content and format of master's theses and doctoral dissertations (p. 20). Additionally, CGS (2004c) believes that it is important to set policies on the nature and format of degree-specific examinations, to establish minimum qualifications of graduate faculty, to consider establishing policies on transfer credits, leaves of absence, the maximum length of time to degree completion, and minimum registration requirements (p. 20). In the CGS 2004 publication it is stated "in cases where the graduate school is not required to formally approve each admission action, it should see that standards are being adhered to, either through the review of student files, periodic departmental review, or other such mechanisms" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004c, p. 21). The major organization for graduate deans encourages them to be the guardians of standards. The deans in this study very often chose to uphold the standards. Standards were modified based on the number and type of petitions coming to them. As new policies were created, standards were modified to address students' needs in today's environment. Deans want quality graduate programs approved that meet standards and address the needs of the states in which they work.

Graduate Dean as "Conductor"

To better understand the role of the graduate dean as conductor, consider the process of developing a new program. Just like a conductor working with an orchestra on a new musical arrangement for the first time, the dean might work with departments on a

draft of a new program proposal. As the orchestra practices the piece, they improve. It is the same with an initial draft of a proposal for a new program. As ideas are obtained from an array of individuals (other faculty members, college deans, etc.), the draft becomes stronger. Finally, the orchestra presents their work at a concert, so it is with the program proposal. It is ready to be presented to the governing body for the institution. At some institutions, the dean carries the ideas of a new program all the way to the state board or system for its approval. In a sense, the graduate dean can also be a conductor when it comes to the program review process. Every orchestra needs to listen critically to themselves to determine their strengths and weaknesses. So it is with program review. Departments are asked to write self-studies, evaluators take a critical look at the programs, all with the main goal of strengthening and bettering the programs.

In a policy statement published by CGS (1990, p. 17) entitled, "Academic Review of Graduate Programs" they recommend to departments that the self-study answer the following five questions:

1. What do you do?
2. Why do you do it?
3. How well do you do it, and who thinks so?
4. What difference does it make whether you do it or not?
5. How well does what you do relate to why you say you do it? (p. 17).

In order to answer these questions, CGS (1990a, p. 17) recommends that the department provide the following information: departmental mission and organization, program purpose, departmental size, faculty profile, faculty research and scholarship activity, faculty contribution to graduate program, student profile, financial support for graduate

students, facilities, curriculum, student productivity, programmatic climate, collateral support, profile of graduates, and an overall assessment of program. In examining these data, one can see the relationship between program review and standards. Questions raised might be whether the student to faculty ratio is adequate. Are students publishing their work? What is the time to degree? Where do graduates find employment? Are the goals of the program met?

Providing opportunities for students to grow professionally is important. Activities like teacher assistant training sessions assist in this endeavor. Dean Nine had worked to establish a center to assist graduate students to become better instructors. In this way, Dean Nine was serving as a "conductor."

Graduate Dean as "Ambassador/Advocate"

As was determined in this study, graduate deans facilitate the program approval process. Deans helped faculty with drafts of early program proposals and then shepherded them through the campus approval processes all the way to the state board or system for final approval. In doing so the dean is serving as an ambassador and an advocate for the programs that he/she represents. The development of new programs, or a change in programs, is influenced by the emphasis in economic development. A graduate dean willing to be an ambassador of its institution and an advocate for its programs will greatly improve the chances of building partnerships with businesses and other institutions.

In looking at the institutional websites in this study, economic development initiatives were at the forefront. One example included Wright State University's approval to host a center of data management through the Governor of Ohio's economic

development program called "The Third Frontier." According to their website (Points of pride, 2004) they have been awarded "$11 million with a $32 million match from industry and government, to create the Wright Center for Advanced Data Management and Analysis on campus. The project, a collaboration among universities, business and government, will help position Ohio as an international leader in data management innovation." This innovative program will largely draw on the expertise of Wright State's Ph.D. program in computer science.

According to Koropchak, Rice, Mead, and Wilson (2003) "Southern Illinois University—Carbondale has been characterized by state officials as 'very entrepreneurial' and the 'economic engine for southern Illinois'"(p. 22). It has developed joint ventures within the city of Carbondale as well as outside the state including the National Science Foundation and the University of Missouri. These entrepreneurial efforts have boosted their research dollars. Their goal is to continue to increase external awards, increase the number of research centers, and increase graduate enrollments (Koropchak, Rice, Mead, and Wilson, 2003, p. 26-27).

Overall, the intent of economic development is to foster growth and development for the state. With the right partnerships graduate programs could be strengthened. Dean Six cited several examples of how the university plays an important role in economic development bringing in dollars from grants. The standards for graduate programs could be affected positively by receipt of funding from partners. Deans need to be ambassadors and advocates for their institutions to forge these partnerships.

Dean Ten expressed concern about the way in which stakeholders in the state are approached regarding economic development initiatives. He explained,

> The bigger concern is how to get our point across with our stakeholders that graduate education is not something that every institution in the state has to have, ad doing that in a way that doesn't make us look, [like] the elite institution that wants to...basically...put a damper on everybody's enthusiasm for what they could do for economic development in the state.

Centralized and Decentralized Graduate Education and its Relationship to Standards

Lynch and Bowker (1984, p. 15) provide the CGS' 1981 definition of a decentralized system as "one in which 'authority and administrative controls are assigned to the deans of the various schools and colleges'. Centralized graduate education is when administrative functions of graduate education are centralized in a single unit such as the graduate school. CGS has always strongly endorsed centralized graduate education. Arguments against decentralization focus on "institutional coherence" (Mortimer and McConnell, 1978, p. 242) and the concern that lack of coherence leads to conflict between humanists and scientists and between professional schools and academic disciplines. An even greater concern is that if departments are independent, their goals may not match the institution's goals (Mortimer and McConnell, 1978). Wilshire (1990) quotes Charles Muscatine from a 1985 article in *Academe* as saying that "the organization of faculties by academic discipline has progressively clouded, concealed, and virtually erased the faculty's sense of responsibility for the curriculum as a whole" (p. 73).

The institutions in this study generally have a mix of both centralized and decentralized authority. Two of the institutions in the study, University at Buffalo: The State University of New York and West Virginia University are more decentralized than

the others. No matter how decentralized an institution is, the dean still perceives his/her role to be establishing and maintaining minimum graduate education standards. Additionally, institutions in this study that tended to be decentralized had centralized some aspects of graduate education. For example, the interdisciplinary programs had a centralized structure and reported to the Graduate School for their budget.

Was there bias on the part of deans as to whether they preferred a centralized versus a decentralized environment? For most of the deans, I found a certain comfort level with the environment in which they were working. Only one of the deans expressed a desire to be working in a different type of structure; however, overall, I would say the deans were willing to defend the organizational structure that they were in.

All ten deans in this study brought up standards, minimum requirements, and various exceptions to those requirements that are often requested by students and faculty. The duties of the dean are tied more to their reporting structure and their position descriptions, rather than to whether the graduate school is centralized or decentralized. For example, the dean who holds the title "Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Dean" has a set of priorities that are somewhat different than the dean who is the "Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Dean." This is not to say that deans who report to the provost are not concerned with research endeavors and that those who report to the research side of the institution are not concerned with academic standards and achievement. All of the deans in this study were guardians of standards and academic excellence.

The time deans spend coordinating and directing research activities obviously greatly varies when they are responsible for the research component. Dean Nine said that

twenty hours a week was spent in the Graduate School and forty hours "on the rest". Dean Seven shared that if one is looking at "100% time probably about 50% time is spent on research, the research management side, about 30% (on) graduate studies and 20% (on) provost activities." Perhaps the CGS could reevaluate its position that centralized graduate education is preferable, since in terms of academic standards it did not appear to matter whether the graduate school's administrative structure was centralized or decentralized. In other words, deans held the role as the guardian of standards in both centralized and decentralized institutions.

Implications from the Study

This study demonstrates that the graduate dean is continually guarding the standards of graduate education and encouraging academic excellence. As petitions come in to the graduate school and as new policies and programs are developed, it is the role of the graduate dean to consider the rules, policies, regulations and standards in place and work to uphold the standards or to modify them. There are many intervening conditions that influence the dean and these have been described. All of the ten intervening conditions can affect the dean's ability to maintain or modify the standards. Obviously, the dean has no control over the events of the nation or world. However, graduate deans can help shape policies and procedures. Graduate deans should employ their skills as conductors, ambassadors and advocates to help develop sound standards and national policies.

The Council of Graduate Schools could assist by providing opportunities for graduate deans to enhance their "people" skills. Workshops on conflict resolution have

become part of the annual meeting. Continued efforts like that could prove to be helpful. Workshops on building alliances and team-work may also be beneficial.

The demographics of graduate students are going to change based on recent projections. Hispanics will become the largest minority group among high school graduates in 2005-06 (Syverson, 2004, p. 5). The Bureau of the Census data show that all ethnic groups except whites will increase in number over the 2002-2025 period (Syverson, 2004, p. 5). These projections have ramifications for U.S. institutions.

In addition to demographic trends, there is now competition from universities in other countries offering the Ph.D. European institutions have more than doubled their doctoral production. Brown and Syverson (2004, p. 3) cite figures showing that other countries are entering into the market offering doctoral degrees in science and engineering. For example, in the field of engineering, 50 percent of doctoral degrees are awarded to international graduate students in the U.K. (Brown and Syverson, 2004, p. 3). In Chapter II, there was a discussion tracing the early roots of graduate education to Europe. Ironically, when graduate education was just beginning, the United States modeled its schools after Europe. Once again it looks like Europe is going to be a strong competitor to United States universities and may force change and improvements in graduate education.

The tragic events of September 11, 2002 also affected graduate education. The ways that students apply for visas, their ability to gain a visa, and the rules once an international student has arrived in the United States have all changed since 9/11. Potential international students have difficulty when applying for and obtaining visas. NAFSA (n.d.) posts the following statement on their website:

> Far too many ad judicatory and investigative resources are wasted on routine reviews of low-risk applications. This not only frustrates and delays visa applicants unnecessarily; it also precludes the allocation of resources pursuant to risk analysis. The practice of across-the-board visa interviews has led to millions of 90-second interviews of dubious security value, which clog the system while precluding serious scrutiny where it is needed (para 4).

International students have to enroll in a certain number of credits to be "in status," which requires graduate schools to constantly monitor students' progress. Research topics for students in the sciences have to be considered in light of post 9/11. In the words of Dean One, considerations must be made as to how to "protect the research endeavor from potential misuse by terrorists." Regulations imposed because of 9/11 need to be closely examined so as not to harm research endeavors.

The war on terrorism continues to affect graduate education as students are called up for active duty. Accommodations must be made for students called to serve and with these come exceptions to standards and rules. Examples specifically cited by Dean Two included allowing extended time to remove incomplete grades and allowing students to take a leave from programs, encouraging them to return when they are able and possibly allowing them to resume their fellowship upon their return.

The down side to the dean as the guardian of standards is whether this phenomenon inhibits creative thinking and new ways to consider graduate education. For example, the popularity of distance education programs created discussions about standards. Seat time versus quality learning time was an issue, along with a host of

others. An awareness, on the part of graduate deans, that the context of graduate education is dynamic, may be beneficial.

Recommendations for Further Study

Further study to determine how a centralized or decentralized environment affects graduate education is suggested. Questions such as whether the size of an institution affects whether centralization or decentralization occurs could be studied. Interviews with graduate deans and graduate directors could be held and then compared on centralized and decentralized campuses to study the differences. As was noted in Chapter I, the graduate dean is only one of several influences on graduate education. A study comparing the responses of other staff members, such as the assistant or associate dean, along with the graduate dean would perhaps present a fuller picture of the role of the graduate dean. Another important part of graduate education are graduate program directors and graduate faculty. It would be a very different study if graduate directors and graduate faculty were interviewed and their responses were analyzed along with responses of graduate deans. A comparison of their answers would lead to further insights. In addition, a study gathering data on the length of time as a dean and discipline of the dean and whether this affects their role as dean could be carried out.

The deans spoke about accreditation and stated that accreditation requirements influence standards but did not give specific examples. A study on how accreditation affects standards would be useful in light of the emphasis put on campuses to continually work towards accreditation. Another area worth further study is the role that the push towards economic development plays on standards and how graduate deans can work with both the economic and academic side to bring success to graduate programs.

There is little or no "training" provided to new deans on campuses. Additional research on the role of the dean specific to advocacy in order to gain more funding for graduate education may benefit new deans and may improve the way they go about affecting change on campuses.

Reflections

The data from this study indicates that in all of the roles of the graduate dean, the one thing that is certain is that the standards of academic excellence are continually being guarded. As Dean Two stated, "The strongest role the Graduate Dean can aspire to is moral conscience and protector of institutional standards." To "define and support excellence in graduate education, and the research and scholarly activities associated with it" (Council of Graduate Schools, 2004c, p.4) graduate deans must serve as guardians of the standards. Graduate deans exist to ensure academic excellence as policies and programs are developed. The graduate deans in this study did not do all of these things by themselves. They had significant help from their associate and assistant deans, the staff at their institutions, and the faculty. They worked as conductors might in a symphony, gathering faculty to talk about their ideas for a new program and then being the program's advocate and ambassador ensuring that it gets through the process. Graduate deans employ strategies to help them ensure that standards are met. Written policy, including legal documents are consulted when making decisions. They consult with both the local and global academic communities so that decisions can be made based on facts and national trends. Processes are continually assessed and reevaluated to ensure minimum standards are met. Policies may change due to the needs of the academic community, but are done after much deliberation, consultation, and preparation.

Additionally, even though policies may change, ultimately the goal is to strive for standards of academic excellence. Deans encourage the development of programs that meet the needs of the state. With the changing demographic trends graduate deans need to be helping to develop innovative programs that are marketable to the academic community. The dean's role is to facilitate the program approval process and be their advocate.

If one is looking to raise standards of graduate education, it is my view that centralizing the organizational structure is not the answer. High quality faculty will help attract high quality graduate students. Efforts to ensure support for faculty salaries, adequate research and scholarly/creative facilities are critical to productivity. Offering quality mentoring from advisors will go a long ways to attracting the best and brightest graduate students. In addition, efforts made towards increasing stipend levels, offering fellowships, ensuring adequate health insurance benefits, and providing graduate students with professional training (i.e., faculty/professional preparation) is crucial. The experiences that graduate students have on campuses are of utmost importance in recruiting and retaining students. Concentrated efforts to work with faculty members on their mentoring ability is crucial to high quality graduate education. Dean Eight talked about criteria that had been approved to ensure that graduate faculty members were meeting their obligations and roles. The graduate dean in a centralized or decentralized graduate school environment should be concerned about the quality of the graduate faculty, aware of academic needs, and working to enhance graduate education.

Nichols (1959, p.123) discussed the "ambiguous role of the graduate dean" in the 1950's and Rhodes (2001, p.134) advocated for a stronger role and authority of the

graduate dean. This belief, that the graduate dean needs to be given more authority, has been prevalent for many years. Perhaps it is time to accept the place of the graduate dean in the administrative structure and recognize that the graduate dean is quite able and successful at influencing through its role as guardian of standards, conductor, and ambassador/advocate.

As I listened to the deans and examined the data, the most striking element of this study was that applying minimum standards was uppermost in all of the deans' minds, whether they were in centralized or decentralized graduate schools. Upholding standards of academic excellence was of importance to all of the graduate deans in this study.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE E-MAIL TO DEANS WHO MIGHT ATTEND CGS ANNUAL MEETING

Dear Dr.

I am a graduate student in the department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota (UND) and the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota's Graduate School. Because of my role at the Graduate School, I am going to be attending the annual Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) meeting in December. I'm wondering if you are attending and if so, could I meet with you to conduct an interview? If you aren't attending CGS, I would like to try and find a time this next spring or summer to visit with you. If I am unable to personally visit, I'd like to conduct an interview over the telephone.

The purpose of my doctoral research study is to examine the graduate dean's role in graduate education. It is a qualitative study so the themes will emerge from the interviews. I have written a short case study that I am asking each dean to respond. Let me tell you why I have selected you to be interviewed.

In 1999, the North Dakota University System asked each state institution to develop a list of peer institutions. Dennis Jones, from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), was the consultant working with the University System to help identify peer institutions. The peers developed for the University of North Dakota includes your institution. It makes sense to my committee and me to focus research on graduate schools at UND's peer institutions.

Would you be willing to be interviewed as part of my study? Your involvement would require approximately sixty minutes and would entail the following:

1. Allowing me to interview you in person. I had hoped to conduct interviews at the annual CGS meeting. If you are not attending, I hope to visit you on your campus at some point in the spring or summer or talk to you on the telephone. Another possibility might be to meet at a regional CGS meeting. I'd be more than happy to talk with you over breakfast, lunch or dinner at the annual CGS meeting. Some of the lunches and dinners are already scheduled, and I wouldn't want to interfere with the meeting schedule, but I was hoping we could find a time to meet. I would also need your permission to tape our conversation.

2. Responding to a case study that I have developed (attached). You could respond to the case study in writing via e-mail or you could mail your response back to me.

Let me know if you are willing to participate in this study by email (Cynthia.shabb@mail.und.nodak.edu) or telephone (701-777-2944) and if you will be at CGS. I'd proceed then by setting up a meeting time with you.

Thank you for considering my request and responding when you have time to do so. If the e-mail attachments don't come through successfully, I'll send them again or fax or mail them to you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia H. Shabb

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE E-MAIL SENT TO DEANS BELONGING TO MAGS

Dear Dr.
I am a graduate student in the department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota (UND) and the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota's Graduate School. Because of my role at the Graduate School, I am going to be attending the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) meeting this month. I'm wondering if you are attending and if so, could I meet with you to conduct an interview? If you aren't attending MAGS, I would like to conduct a telephone interview with you sometime this spring.

The purpose of my doctoral research study is to understand the role of the graduate dean/director and to see if and how the role of the dean/director changes in a centralized versus a decentralized graduate school. Organizational effectiveness of a graduate school will be examined to distinguish whether graduate education is more effective under a centralized or decentralized model. Let me tell you why I have selected you to be interviewed.

In 1999, the North Dakota University System asked each state institution to develop a list of peer institutions. Dennis Jones, from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), was the consultant working with the University System to help identify peer institutions. The peers developed for the University of North Dakota includes your institution. It makes sense to my committee and me to focus research on graduate schools at UND's peer institutions.

Would you be willing to be interviewed as part of my study? Your involvement would require approximately sixty minutes and would entail the following:

1. Answering a set of questions (attached) that I have developed in consultation with my dissertation committee. I would like to interview you in person if you are attending the MAGS meeting. If not, I would call you over the telephone. I'd be more than happy to talk with you over breakfast, lunch or dinner. Some of the lunches and dinners are already scheduled and I wouldn't want to interfere with the meeting schedule but I was hoping we could find a time to meet. I would also need your permission to tape our conversation.

2. Responding to one or two case studies that I have developed (attached). You could respond to the case study in writing via e-mail or you could mail your responses back to me.

Let me know if you are willing to participate in this study by email (Cynthia.shabb@mail.und.nodak.edu) or telephone (701-777-2944) and if you will be at MAGS. I'd proceed then by setting up a meeting time with you.

Thank you for considering my request and responding when you have time to do so. If the e-mail attachments don't come through successfully, I'll send them again or fax or mail them to you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Cynthia H. Shabb

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

"The Role of the Graduate Dean in Graduate Education"

Principal Investigator:	You are being asked to allow Cynthia H. Shabb, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at the University of North Dakota, to interview you about the role of the graduate dean in graduate education.
Purpose:	The purpose of the study is to understand the role of the Graduate Dean in graduate education.
Duration:	A set of interview questions will be asked of you and a case study will be e-mailed or faxed to each participant. You may wish to prepare a written response to the case study or any of the interview questions. This is certainly acceptable. It may be necessary to follow-up with a second and third interview for further clarification. The follow-up interviews would be no more than thirty minutes each.
Benefits:	More individuals are achieving advanced degrees than ever before. If there are ways that graduate deans can impact the effectiveness of graduate education, than this information needs to be shared. A better understanding of the role of the graduate dean may enhance graduate education.
Risks:	Risks will be minimal since all responses will be coded. There is a slight risk of identification however; none of your responses will be identified with your institution. If at anytime you become uncomfortable with the interview process, I will allow you to suspend the interview.
Alternatives:	If an oral interview is not acceptable, the interviewee would accept written responses.

Confidentiality:	While your name will not be identified, your institution will be. However, none of your responses will be identified with your institute. All tape recorded interviews, any written responses to the questions and/or case study will be held in a secure location in a locked file cabinet, for three years after data analysis is complete, and destroyed upon completion of the research report and dissertation and/or article(s) based on the analyses. The audiotape will be transcribed with a notation as to which school you represent. After the tape is transcribed, it will be erased. Your signed consent form will be stored in a locked cabinet separate from the data.
Two contacts:	If you have questions about this research, please call Cynthia H. Shabb at 777-2944 or Dr. Katrina Meyer at 777-3452. If you have any other questions or concerns, please call the Office of Research and Program Development at 777-4279.
Voluntary Participation:	Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time.
Discontinued Participation:	Discontinued participation may occur at any time with no adverse consequences to you.
Findings:	The results of the study will result in a research paper and a dissertation. The dissertation will be published and available through UMI Proquest Digital Dissertations.
Consent Form:	All participants will receive a copy of the signed consent form.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant

_____

Date

Check one:

_____ Willing to participate

_____ Not willing to participate

REFERENCES

Allen, H. L. (1987). *The role of the graduate dean in promoting selective excellence in graduate education and research.* In Proceedings of the Conference on Excellence. Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study Conference on Excellence. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Board of Regents. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 299 861)

Batson, A. & Hess, C. (Eds.). (2003). *A decade of planning and achievement in the face of challenge: Self-study for accreditation by the higher learning commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.* Grand Forks, North Dakota: University of North Dakota.

Benoit, J. N. , Mohr, T. M. , & Shabb, C. H. (2004). Entry-level doctoral degrees: Issues facing graduate schools. *Journal for Higher Education Strategists*, 2(1): 39-56.

Bogue, E. G. & Saunders, R. L. (1992). *The evidence for quality.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. (1991) Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Brewer, D. W. (1978). The perceptions and expectations of presidents, graduate deans, and members of graduate councils of selected institutions of the national association of state universities and land-grant colleges concerning the selection, functions, and role of the graduate dean. (Doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1978). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 39 (10), p. 5970.

Brown, H. & Syverson, P. D. (2004). Data sources: Rough waters ahead? New data from NSF and CGS reveal a sea change in international student applications, enrollment, and demographics. *Communicator, 37*(6), 3, 6).

Bush, V. (1945). Science the endless frontier. United States Government Printing Office. Retrieved June 12, 2004, from http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/nsf50/vbush1945.htm

Carnegie Foundation (n. d.) *Carnegie definitions*. Retrieved July 12, 2004, from http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/CIHE2000/defNotes/Definitions.htm

Chaffee, E. E. (1983). *Rational decision making in higher education: An NCHEMS executive overview*. Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 246 828)

Chernay, G. (1990). *Accreditation and the role of the council on postsecondary accreditation*. Washington, D. C.: Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

Council of Graduate Schools. (1990a). *Academic review of graduate programs*. Washington, D. C.: Council of Graduate Schools.

Council of Graduate Schools. (1990b). *Organization and administration of graduate education: A policy statement*. Washington, D. C.: Council of Graduate Schools.

Council of Graduate Schools. (2002). *Graduate enrollment and degrees: 1986 to 2000*. Washington, D. C.: Council of Graduate Schools.

Council of Graduate Schools. (2004a). *CGS background and quick links: History and mission*. Retrieved June 5, 2004, from http://www.cgsnet.org/AboutCGS/index.htm

Council of Graduate Schools (2004b). *Council of Graduate Schools survey finds widespread declines in international graduate student applications to U.S. graduate schools for fall 2004.* Retrieved August 23, 2004, from http://www.cgsnet.org/pdf/CGS_PR_IntlSurvey.pdf

Council of Graduate Schools. (2004c) *Organization and administration of graduate education.* Washington, D. C.: Council of Graduate Schools.

Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. (n. d.) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education: Role and value of accreditation. Retrieved August 8, 2004, from http://www.neasc.org/cihe/ciherole.htm

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dayton Area Graduate Studies Institute. (n. d.) Retrieved August 28, 2004, from http://www.dagsi.org/

Eaton, J.S. (2001) Regional accreditation reform who is served? *Change 33*(2) p. 38-45.

Edelson, P. J. (1995). Historical and cultural perspectives on centralization/decentralization in continuing education. *Continuing Higher Education Review, 59* (3), 143-156.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Geiger, L. G. (1958). University of the northern plains: A history of the University of North Dakota 1883-1958. Grand Forks, ND: The University of North Dakota Press.

Harcleroad, F. F. (1980). *Accreditation: History, process, and problems.* AAHE-ERIC Higher education research report. Washington, D. C.: American Association for Higher Education; ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 198 774)

Harriman, P. L. (1938). The master's degree. [Electronic version]. *The Journal of Higher Education, 9*(1), 23-38.

Heiss, A. M. (1970) Challenges to graduate schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Higher Learning Commission.(2003) *Assurance section: Report of a comprehensive evaluation visit.*RetrievedAugust29,2004from, http://www.und.edu/dept/cilt/nca/secure/UNDTRdraftfAssurance.pdf

Hoving, K. L., Woodruff, G. , & Musacchia, X.J. (1989). The changing role of the graduate dean. *Communicator, 22*(8-9). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 329 144)

Johns Hopkins University. (2004). About Johns Hopkins. Retrieved June 12, 2004, from http://www.jhu.edu/

Johnson, A. W. (1984). A planning summary update. (Available from the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, Box 8178, Grand Forks, ND 58202)

Khalil, E. M. (1987). *Graduate education—The social context.* Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States (26th, San Antonio, Texas, December 2-5, 1986). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 331 426)

Katz, J. , & Hartnett, R. (1976). Scholars in the making. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company.

Koropchak, J. A., Rice, P. M., Mead, J., & Wilson, D. (2003). Reinventing the mid-level research university. Journal for Higher Education Strategists, 1(1), 11-31.

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (1993). *Credibility: How leaders gain and lose it, why people demand it.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Lynch, D. M., & Bowker, L.H. (1984). *Graduate deans and graduate education: A national study.* Indiana University of Pennsylvania: Institute for Advanced Research. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 247 872)

Malaney, G. D. (1988). Graduate education as an area of research in the field of higher education. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Vol. 4. Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 397-454). New York: Agathon Press, Inc.

Mayhew, L. B., Ford, P. J., & Hubbard, D. L. (1990). *The quest for quality: The challenge for undergraduate education in the 1990s.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Morison, S. E. (1936). *Harvard college in the seventeeth century: Tercentennial history of Harvard college and university, 1636-1936.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mortimer, K. P. & McConnell, T. R. (1978). *Sharing authority effectively.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2004). *Promoting secure borders and open doors: A National-interest-based visa policy for students and scholars.* Retrieved July 17, 2004, from http://www.nafsa.org/content/PublicPolicy/NAFSAontheIssues/VisaRecsCover.htm

National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Projections of education statistics to 2013.* Retrieved June 5, 2004, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/ch_4.asp#2

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. (n.d.) *Information services.* Retrieved July 1, 2004, from http://www.nchems.org/InfoServices/infoserv.htm

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems. (n.d.) [NCHEMS NCES Finance Dataset, 1997-1998]. Unpublished raw data.

Nichols, R. F. (1959). The ambiguous position of the graduate school dean. [Electronic version]. *The Journal of Higher Education 30* (3), 123-127.

North Dakota University System. (2000). [*Resource allocation mechanism peer selection criteria*, report 2, September 27, 2000]. Unpublished report .

Pennings, R. R. (1990). The changing roles and responsibilities of graduate deans from 1979 to 1989 (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Dakota, 1990). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *51*(6), 1860.

Points of pride. (2004). *About WSU.* Retrieved July 16, 2004, from http://www.wright.edu/news_events/pubs/pride/pride4.html

Powell, R. E. (1987). *The role of the graduate dean in achieving excellence.* In Proceedings of the Conference on Excellence. Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study Conference on Excellence. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Board of Regents. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 299 861)

Pugh, D. S., Hickson, D. J., Hinings, C. R. , & Turner, C. (1968). Dimensions of organization structure. *Administration Science Quarterly 13*, 65-105.

Rhodes, F. H. T. (2001. *The creation of the future: The role of the American university.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Rudolph, F. (1990). *The American college and university: A history.* Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press. Springfield, MO: Southwest Missouri State University.

Rylance, D. (1981) *Historical information on graduate school.* June 2, 1981. Memo from Dan Rylance, Library to Dean Johnson, Graduate School. (Available from the University of North Dakota Graduate School, Box 8178, Grand Forks, ND 58202)

Sanford, J.B. (1978). *The graduate school and its organizational structure: A contingency theory approach.* Chicago: Illinois. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 159 940)

Seidel, J. (1998). *The Ethnograph v5.0: A Users Guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Software, Inc.

Simpson, J.A. & Weiner, E.S.C. (Eds.). (1989) *The Oxford English dictionary.* (2nd ed., Vols. 1-20). New York: Oxford University Press

Sims, L.B. & Syverson, P.D. (2003). Utilizing data for effective administration of graduate education. *Journal for Higher Education Strategists, 1* (1) 68-94.

Slate, A. M. (1994). *AGS: A history.* Austin, TX: The Association of Graduate Schools in the Association of American Universities.

Smith, Kenneth L. (1998). *American educator: The life of William Maxwell Blackburn.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Speicher, A. L. (n.d.). *The association of American universities: A century of service to higher education.* Washington, D.C.: Association of American Universities. Retrieved June 12, 2004, from http://www.aau.edu/aau/Begin.html

Spriestersbach, D. C. (2000). A retrospective of graduate education in transition. In Einhellig, F. A. (Ed.) , *Proceedings of the 56th Annual Meeting Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools: Graduate education in transition.* Retrieved August 8, 2004, from http://associations.smsu.edu/mags/Proceedings.htm

Springfield, J. G. (1978). The role of the graduate dean in major universities (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1978). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 40*(1), 58.

Stewart, D. W. (2000) Looking for leadership? Find a graduate dean. *Communicator, 33*(6), 1,8.

Stewart, D. W. (2004) Message from the president. Retrieved June 5, 2004, from http://www.cgsnet.org/aboutcgs/DWSmessage.htm

Stewart, M.A. (1959). The organization of the graduate school. [Electronic Version]. *The Journal of Higher Education. 30*(3), 136-140.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* CA: Sage Publications.

Syverson, P. D. (2002) Graduate enrollment and degrees: 1986-2000. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools.

Syverson, P. D. (2004). Data sources: The new demographics projections foretell dramatic changes in U.S. population. *Communicator, 37*(5), 5, 6.

University of North Dakota (1965). *Graduate enrollment rises sharply.* Report: Dakota Student Supplement. 3(1), February 19, 1965, p. 1.

University of North Dakota. (1970). *University of North Dakota Undergraduate Bulletin 1970-1972, 62.* Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.

University of North Dakota. (1978). *University of North Dakota Undergraduate Bulletin 1978-1980, 70.* Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.

University of North Dakota. (1979). *Synopsis of the UND Graduate School,* August 29, 1979. (Available from the University of North Dakota Graduate School, Box 8178, Grand Forks, ND 58202).

University of North Dakota. (1980). *Synopsis of the UND Graduate School,* February 14, 1980. (Available from the University of North Dakota Graduate School, Box 8178, Grand Forks, ND 58202).

University of North Dakota. (1982). *University of North Dakota Undergraduate Bulletin 1982-1984, 68.* Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.

University of North Dakota. (1983). Draft for North Central Accreditation Report, January 20, 1983. (Available from the University of North Dakota Graduate School, Box 8178, Grand Forks, ND 58202)

University of North Dakota. (1992). *University of North Dakota Undergraduate Bulletin 1992-94, 84.* Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.

University of North Dakota. (1999). *Academic catalog 1999-2001 University of North Dakota, 91(3).* Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.

University of North Dakota. (2001). *Academic catalog 2001-2003.* University of North Dakota, 93(3). Grand Forks, ND. University of North Dakota.

University of North Dakota. (2003). *Academic catalog 2003-2005 University of North Dakota, 95(3).* Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota.

University of North Dakota Graduate Committee. (1991). The future of graduate education at UND: A report submitted to the VPAA by the UND Graduate Committee. (Available from the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, Box 8178, Grand Forks, ND 58202)

Veit, W. C. (1975). Functions of the graduate dean (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1975). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 36*(6) 3463.

Walters, E. (1965). The rise of graduate education. In E. Walters (Ed.), *Graduate Education Today*, (p. 16). Washington, D. C.: American Council of Education.

Wilshire, B. W. (1990) *The moral collapse of the university: Professionalism, purity, and alienation.* Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Young, K., Chambers, C. M., Kells, H. R. , & Associates. (1983). *Understanding accreditation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.